

Water, Water Everywhere, Thanks to Logistics Expert



At a Glance

Project: Safe Water Team

Purpose: Provide life-saving water filter systems to families in Third World countries

Project Dates: January – July 2009

Volunteer Hours Invested: 1,000

Impact: Supply Plan resulted in 7,000 HydrAid® BioSand water filters distributed in the Dominican Republic and spread to more than 65,000 filters delivered world-wide

Scientific know-how and ingenuity led to the invention of the HydrAid® BioSand water filter, a small, inexpensive device that removes contaminants from water without any moving parts or need for electricity. With a HydrAid filter, a family in an underdeveloped country can provide itself with up to 50 gallons of safe water every day for 10 years.

The World Health Organization estimates that 3.4 million people die each year from water-borne illnesses. So getting HydrAid filters to the people who need them can literally be a lifesaver.

“That’s where I come in,” says Kristi Galus, a supply chain planner for Dow. “You might think that delivering water filters is easy. It isn’t. In underdeveloped countries, you have to learn what works, and doesn’t work, locally.”

Through the Dow Sustainability Corps, Kristi traveled to the Dominican Republic in support of the Safe Water Team, a coalition of companies, organizations and government agencies working to design, build and distribute HydrAid filters. Dow joined the Safe Water Team in 2008, and the company’s participation included a pledge to donate 2 million pounds of a plastic resin that is crucial to the filters’ operation. Already, Dow has delivered more than 600,000 pounds of the resin, enough to make 90,000 filters.

“What was missing was a solid business plan, to scale up production and distribution, and support it for the long term,” Kristi says.

“How to get things where they needed to be. Who was going to do it. And getting the tools and materials needed to make it happen. In the most remote areas, where the need is the greatest, there are often no roads. My job was to come up with a supply plan that anticipated and overcame these barriers.”

As if getting the filters there wasn't difficult enough, Kristi's team also had to make sure people used them once they were available.

“Education is another challenge,” Kristi says. “You need to find the right local people who can help spread the word and teach people how to use these filters. There are many challenges, but we found solutions, and built them into our supply plan.”

That plan has resulted in more than 7,000 filters being delivered to families in the Dominican Republic, and a recently approved grant means 11,250 more are on the way. Distribution has spread in Honduras, Haiti, Ghana and Kenya, with a total of about 65,000 filters now in use around the world every day.

It's a perfect example of how the Dow Sustainability Corps mobilizes the company's greatest asset to solve problems.

“Dow gave me a chance to do something I never would have dreamed possible, changing lives by doing what I know how to do,” Kristi says.



Solution Space

Each day, people around the world seek solutions to the complex environmental, economic and social challenges facing our world.

At Dow, our corporate philanthropic efforts address these challenges and are inherent in everything we do as a global corporation. Our citizenship is a critical component of “Setting the Standard for Sustainability.”

It means we are focused on local citizenship, sustainable innovations, and global footprint reduction, directly supporting our vision to be the most profitable and respected science-driven chemical company in the world.