

## **WaterBytes – Ethos Water**

*Recorded by Laura Boyd  
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In 2001, a man named Peter Thum had an idea. He had been working for McKinsley & Company, a global management consulting company, on a project in South Africa. While he was in South Africa, he saw that many communities had problems accessing clean water and sanitation. He thought that distributing bottled water would help raise awareness of the clean water crisis around the world, as well as help raise money to fund safe water programs in distressed areas. He soon became dedicated to the cause of providing people with clean water, and in 2002, Thum left his job at McKinsley & Company, moving to New York City where he founded Ethos Water.

Ethos Water officially launched in August of 2003, adopting the slogan “helping children get clean water.” Production and distribution skyrocketed in 2005 when Ethos Water was bought by Starbucks. For every bottle of Ethos Water sold, anywhere between five and ten cents is donated to non-governmental water organizations all over the world. Some organizations that have benefitted from Ethos Water sales include Water Partners Inc, UNICEF, CARE, Water Aid, Water Action, and Mercy Corps.

Many areas in a water crisis around the world have already been helped by Ethos Water. Some completed missions include aiding Water Partners Inc in providing safe drinking water and sanitation to Ayinapatti and another area in India, as well as forming a portable water reservoir to make water more

accessible in Cholusnate, Honduras. Also aiding the CARE organization, Ethos Water helped to give the area of Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo long-term access to water. With the help of Ethos, CARE also helped with the tsunami relief in Tamil Nadu, India, and Sumatra, Indonesia, by helping to supply housing supplies, clothing, water kits, vessels for storing water, and by creating new water sources.

These are just a few of the many completed projects aided by Ethos Water. There are also many ongoing projects aimed at bringing the water crisis across the globe to an end. Ethos is currently aiding Water Aid, an organization dedicated to providing clean water and sanitation. Ethos and Water Aid are working to improve the health of residents in Sadar, Bangladesh, Madhya Pradesh, India, and Benishangul Gumuz, Ethiopia, by increasing clean water supply so that women and children will no longer be forced to walk miles a day to find clean water. Water Aid is also working to improve sanitation by educating the people of these areas about proper hygiene practices. In Sumatra, Indonesia, there has been a growing problem with the health of elementary school children. Due to a lack of clean water, these children suffer from anemia, worm infestation, and malnutrition. With help from Ethos Water, Mercy Corps has been making significant progress in improving the health of these school children. Other safe water and sanitation projects continue to progress in Manyara, Tanzania, Northern Province, Rwanda, and Sambaru, Kenya.

Aside from all these positive benefits of the Ethos Water organization, there have been many criticisms of the bottled water brand. A primary concern is

the waste produced by consumption of these bottles of water. Even though Ethos is manufactured by PepsiCo, most Pepsi bottles are made from recycled plastic, whereas Ethos bottles do not contain any recycled materials. Many people believe that the amount of waste generated by these bottles is not worth the five to ten cents donated by Starbucks for each bottle purchased. Also, as each bottle costs \$1.80, and only five to ten cents of this sticker price is donated, Ethos is still considered a commercial brand.

Even so, to this day Ethos Water has raised approximately \$6.2 million, and has helped 420,000 people to gain access to clean water all over the world. Ethos continues to work towards their goal of reaching \$10 million in contributions to help fight the water crisis on Planet Earth.

For more information on Ethos Water, visit [www.ethoswater.com](http://www.ethoswater.com)

#### Works Cited

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