

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### MEDIA CONTACT:

Cathy Herholdt, World Concern  
206-546-7374 (office)  
425-794-9775 (cell)  
cathyh@worldconcern.org



## World Concern to Test Solar Water Purifier in Somalia

*Washington Global Health Alliance grants \$150,000 to test PotaVida's Smart Solar Purifier*

December 7, 2015 (SEATTLE) – Seattle-based relief and development organization [World Concern](#) and social venture PotaVida have been selected by the Washington Global Health Alliance (WGHA) for a \$150,000 grant to test at scale the innovative Smart Solar Purifier, a product that provides clean water in disaster relief contexts while automatically tracking usage. World Concern will distribute and test 750 Smart Solar Purifiers in flood and conflict-affected areas of Somalia.

The Smart Solar Purifier has been designed specifically for the disaster relief context. The design is simple to use. Users place the filled bag in the sun, press the start button, and wait for a green light to indicate completion. A red light indicates in-progress status. Disinfection takes a few hours in full sun, allowing up to two treatment cycles per day.

World Concern's Deputy Director of Disaster Response, Chris Sheach says, "World Concern is excited to partner with PotaVida, especially in Somalia – an area of great need. Smart Solar Purifier will help us provide life-saving clean water to displaced people, and have the additional impact of helping to measure – and continuously improve – the success of our programs."

The PotaVida team was motivated by an understanding of the low usage rates of products in the field. "We learned that products distributed in acute disasters have usage rates ranging from 5 to 25 percent," explains Co-founder and CEO, Charlie Matlack, PhD. The problem is not that we don't have products that disinfect water; it is that they are not used. We developed our features to provide accurate and near real-time data from the field so usage rates can be tracked and improved."

The PotaVida Smart Solar Purifier is the only water disinfection device that automatically tracks every use. The electronic solar disinfection monitor logs usage, which can be downloaded by field staff. The usage tracking feature eliminates the uncertainty typical of self-reported usage surveys. "Tracking the actual usage of a product is hugely helpful, especially if you can access the data from afar," said Sheach. "PotaVida's approach to tracking data can change the way we measure the success of relief efforts."

This is not the first tech innovation partnership for World Concern, which received accolades for a partnership with Seattle startup ScanMyList in 2012 to distribute food in Somalia. This initiative was also facilitated by the WGHA.

WGHA “has infused critical support for global health technologies on the verge of wide scale impact. Washington is a hub for global health and it makes sense for us to support innovations that stem from this community,” said Lisa Cohen, Executive Director of the WGHA.

For more information on World Concern’s programs or to donate, please visit [www.worldconcern.org](http://www.worldconcern.org).

For interviews or more information, please contact Cathy Herholdt, Director of Marketing and Communications, at (206) 794-9775 or [cathyh@worldconcern.org](mailto:cathyh@worldconcern.org).

*World Concern is a Christian global relief and development organization. With our supporters, our faith compels us to extend life-saving help and opportunity to people facing the most profound human challenges of extreme poverty. At World Concern, the solutions we offer, the work we do, creates lasting, sustainable change. Lasting change that provides lasting hope. Our areas of expertise include disaster response, clean water, education, food security, child protection, microfinance and health.*

