

PRESS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Executive education programme exposes global business leaders to Cambodia's water issue: improving access for rural households

HONG KONG & CAMBODIA - FEB 5 2012 - The Global Institute For Tomorrow (GIFT) will be conducting its flagship Global Young Leaders Programme (YLP) in conjunction with a promising social investment in Cambodia. Twenty five senior executives from companies such as Orix, Sonepar, NEC, BSN & SOMA will be in Phnom Penh to aid one of Cambodia's first venture capital firms, DEVENCO. A business plan will be created which ultimately seeks to provide rural households with greater access to safe water.

“For the people interested in impact investment in Asia, GIFT represents a resourceful network providing information sharing, contacts, advocacy work... It allows visibility to projects or problems that are often overlooked throughout the world by the business and investment community [...]. The collaboration within the framework of the YLP is also likely to provide some interesting perspectives from experienced people on our project,” says Christophe Forsinetti, CEO, DEVENCO.

Located in Phnom Penh, participants will for one week stay in Cambodia where they will work alongside DEVENCO. They will visit villages with and without access to clean water, and speak with representatives from USAID, GRET and the World Bank. Participants on the YLP will then use the information gathered and their own business acumen to produce an output. Afterwards they will present this output at a free, public forum on 10th February, 2pm at the Imperial Garden Hotel and Villa in Phnom Penh. This plan will see DEVENCO push forward its business development to tackle what is perhaps Cambodia's most pressing socio-economic issue – access to safe drinking water.

Despite the progress made in many areas, access to clean water is still an issue for much of the population, especially the 80% of Cambodians who live in rural areas. The Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP) of The World Bank estimated that in 2005 over US\$500 million (7.2% of GDP) was lost due to water-borne illnesses. The provision of these basic services is integral to the nation's development and also present exciting business opportunities for social enterprise and impact investments.

The output hopes to provide impact or social investors with a blue-print of how finance can be used to scale-up the efforts of small, local businesses that provide basic services and affordable rates, using local resources. It will also provide social investors with viable investment models that can be replicated across Asia.

“This project represents an exciting new approach to solving one of Cambodia's most critical development challenges. The hope is that it will provide a model which can be replicated in other areas and lead to greater investment into entrepreneurial activities linked to social benefit. For participants it will no doubt be an important exercise in going beyond the usual assumptions about development and rethinking the role of business,” explains Eric Stryson, Director, GIFT.

Notes to editors:

About the Global Institute For Tomorrow (GIFT)

GIFT is an independent, pan-Asian think and *do* tank, dedicated to advancing the understanding of the impacts of globalisation through analysis, debate, dialogue and learning. GIFT tackles the critical leadership needs of current and future decision-makers through unique action learning programmes that offer practical and commercially viable solutions to meet development requirements. It also links business, public policy and civil society issues in creative ways to address the inherent contradictions of globalisation-related challenges in Asia. It ultimately channels management expertise and capital to implement projects designed to deliver tangible socio-economic and environmental benefits and create prosperous communities.

To date, GIFT has conducted 24 Young Leaders Programmes (YLP) in six countries focused on topics as diverse as forestry, elderly healthcare, renewable energy solutions and sanitation.

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Notable media coverage for GIFT:

[The Guardian, July 2011 - Arguments for constrained capitalism in Asia](#)

[South China Morning Post, August 2010- The 'GIFT' of water.](#)

[Phnom Penh Post, May 2009 – New business mixes profit motive and sustainability](#)

About DEVENCO

DEVENCO is one of the first venture capital and investment consulting companies created in Cambodia. The lack of institutional financing for SMEs in the country has led a group of visionary partners to bring together more than 15 years of experience in various sectors and countries in order to provide the best projects along with strong capital and advisory services. DEVENCO's investment philosophy is guided by a belief in focusing on businesses who strongly contribute to the social and economical development of the country such as healthcare, waste management and agriculture. For more on DEVENCO, visit www.devenco.com.kh

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