

Water from Air

06 December 2002

Washington

Books and articles have proliferated about the world's shrinking supply of clean drinking water. Now a U.S. based company exports innovative machines that produce water out of thin air.

Everyone needs water to live, but not everyone has access to clean drinking water. The situation in many countries is not getting better.

The World Health Organization estimates that 80-percent of all sickness in the world can be attributed to unsafe water and sanitation. The WHO reports that each year more than 10-million people die from water-related diseases from diarrhea, intestinal worms and parasites, to blindness, and cancers.

"We tended not to talk about the problem five-years ago or 10-years ago. Now you will not find a country that the newspaper will not have, in a week, an article regarding the water crisis going on in the country. It is hitting not only the poor community, It is hitting very rich countries in certain areas. It is affecting us all," says Hisham Fawzi, a Virginia-based entrepreneur who has come up with a low-cost solution he is marketing around the world to try to help.

The Egyptian-born executive is selling a simple machine called the Water Finder.

Based on a design by a Florida inventor, the machine pulls air through a filter that removes contaminants. Then water is extracted from the air, much like a dehumidifier. An integrated filter then cleans the water of chemicals and contaminants, making it fit to drink.

Mr. Fawzi worked with environmental engineers from the University of Maryland to refine the product that he says is the first of its kind.

The Water Finder does not depend on access to water sources in the ground to function. Mr. Fawzi says it is cost effective too, producing clean water for roughly 23-cents for four-liters. "The Water Finder can be a standard home appliance in all the homes," he says. "This is my ultimate goal. It will replace, if I can say, the bottled water in a certain way."

The machine extracts more than five-gallons of purified water from the air in relatively humid climates. In arid areas like parts of Saudi Arabia or Mexico, Mr. Fawzi markets a more sophisticated version of the Water Finder he describes as state-of-the art.


Access to uncontaminated drinking water is not just a challenge for developing countries. Mr. Fawzi talks of industrial areas in Europe, Asia, and the United States where water supplies can be a health risk too. "The rich people depend on bottled water now, totally, in their drinking habits," he says. "And this will cut their costs. The poor, if it is like UNICEF, we go through big organizations, like World Bank to get it through."

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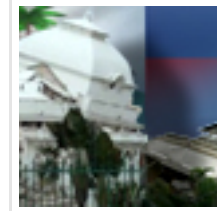
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Mr. Fawzi says a larger machine, which is adaptable for community use, can produce several-thousand liters of bacteria-free water a day.

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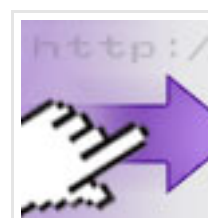
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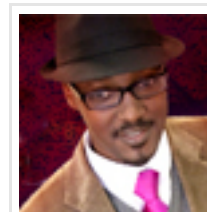
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