

Leading Large Scale Technology and Social Enterprises in the Service of Global Health

With Evan Thomas

Thursday, October 15th
4 p.m. in the ECCR 200

Global health programs are intended by funders and implementers to have a positive impact on health and livelihood. These efforts take forms large and small, from community church groups to the World Bank.

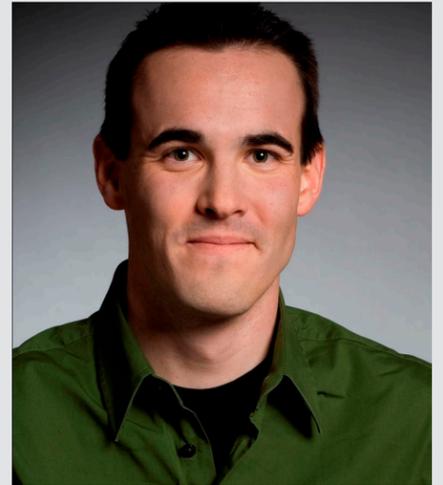
Once these projects are installed, typically the implementers themselves evaluate them. When resources allow, some may invite external experts to visit the projects a few times. Under the best of circumstances, sometimes funding is available to run a randomized controlled trial to rigorously evaluate if the projects are improving environmental, health or other outcomes. But, usually sooner rather than later, the funding runs out for that particular project, and everyone moves on.

This has resulted in sad statistics. For example, around half of the water pumps installed in some African countries are broken a few years after they're installed, and most never get fixed.

The SWEETLab at Portland State University – led by CU-Boulder alumnus Evan Thomas -- proposes an alternative. They are working to move the mindset of funders toward pay-for-performance models of global health interventions. Instead of pushing money toward projects based on promises, pay interventions for successfully demonstrating impact that meets this intent. They propose moving from intent to impact via a combination of aligned standards, metrics and evidence.

Thomas, who has worked since 2002 in developing countries demonstrating these alternative approaches, will present business models that incentivize continued engagement in communities through carbon finance, and technologies to monitor performance. Dr. Thomas' programs have reached nearly half a million people in Rwanda, and are engaged in 15 other countries around the world.

BIO: Evan A Thomas, PhD, PE, MPH is an Assistant Professor and Director of the Sweet (Sustainable Water, Energy and Environmental Technologies) Laboratory, and a Faculty Fellow in the Institute for Sustainable Solutions at Portland State University. Evan works at the interface of engineering, environmental health and social business, with professional experience working in government, industry, non-profits and academia. Evan holds a Ph.D. in Aerospace Engineering Sciences from the University of Colorado at Boulder, is a registered Professional Engineer (P.E.) in Environmental Engineering in the State of Texas, and holds a Masters in Public Health from the Oregon Health and Science University.



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