



# design that matters

INNOVATION FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

## **NEWS: For immediate release**

Cambridge, Massachusetts - March 26, 2006 – Timothy Prester, founder of Design that Matters, together with a field team of university students and project engineers, is traveling to Bangladesh this week to present design concepts to the Centre for Mass Education. The goal of this week's trip is to present design concepts to CMES, conduct field observations and continue to assess the client's needs. Together with Timothy Prester, the field team includes Holly Kretschmar and Sally Madsen from IDEO; and Stanford graduate students Atsushi Suzuki and Emily Ford. The Design that Matters field team will present five design concepts to Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim, founder of CMES. The concepts will serve as a catalyst for further discussion about CMES' needs. Field team members will then be able to take this insight back to their design teams at IDEO, Stanford and MIT, and move toward prototype development and project fulfillment.

Design that Matters' goal is to develop a full-function "alpha" prototype by the end of the year, for pilot testing in Bangladesh in 2007. Volume production of the final design is scheduled to begin by December 2007.

### **The Client: The Centre for Mass Education (CMES)**

In Bangladesh, as in most developing countries, there are not enough teachers to meet the demand for elementary, secondary and adult education. Nationwide, the student-to-teacher ratio is 63:1 and 36% of Bangladeshi children never finish primary school. CMES, a nongovernmental organization, was established in 1978 to reach these adolescent drop-outs and provide them with a basic primary education and the technical skills needed to achieve an increased income and quality of life. Students leave the five-year CMES program with the education, job skills and self-confidence necessary to become productive members of their local community.

CMES has been enormously successful in their mission and now reaches more than 30,000 students in 500 rural schools. Their innovative, student-focused educational techniques are continually enhanced with feedback from both teachers and students.

### **The Challenge: Peer-Directed Learning Tools**

The need to reduce teacher workloads and reach more students is one of the greatest ongoing challenges faced by CMES. One method with the potential to stretch educational funds is to encourage the students to learn together, with minimal direct contact with a teacher. This peer-directed learning would allow CMES to extend teaching resources while maintaining high educational standards.

The specific CMES challenge is to develop a low-cost learning tool that will allow students to proceed with their studies as a supplement to direct interaction with a teacher. To solve this challenge and enhance the educational experience of its students, CMES has teamed up with Design that Matters (DtM).

DtM acts as a bridge to bring problems identified by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and members of underserved communities into the classroom for university engineering and business students to tackle in their courses and research. DtM works with NGOs, corporate partners and local entrepreneurs to ensure that promising design innovations result in products and services for communities in need. Working with Design that Matters allows client organizations such as CMES to enlist dedicated help beyond the limits of their existing institutional capacity.

### **Partners in Innovation**

This project marks DtM's first collaboration with a corporate partner. IDEO, a global design consultancy known for its human-centered approach to design and innovation, is devoting valuable resources to the CMES challenge. IDEO employs more than 400 design thinkers in disciplines of design, engineering, social science, and business strategy.

In addition to IDEO, the CMES challenge is being addressed by students at Stanford University and MIT. Stanford's Entrepreneurial Design for Extreme Affordability class is using the CMES challenge to give graduate engineering and business students hands-on exposure to the full entrepreneurial process of product design, manufacturing, and financing. DtM is also working with a unique project group at MIT with expertise in education, business management, engineering and design.

### **Design that Matters Field Team**

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Be sure to check the Design that Matters website in early September to see pictures from the Bangladesh trip and prototypes of CMES design concepts.

### **About Design that Matters (DtM)**

DtM is building a worldwide system that enables the citizen sector, university students, and businesses to jointly innovate for social change. Since its launch at MIT in 2001, DtM has worked with hundreds of university engineering and business students on four continents to develop dozens of prototypes that promise to improve thousands of lives.

DtM has succeeded in fulfilling their social entrepreneurial mission in a cost-effective manner. In the private sector, the value of the CMES project to date is more than \$100,000. Through their business and educational partnerships, DtM has been able to reach this stage of the design process using less than \$10,000.

To get involved, donate or learn more about our other ongoing projects, go to [DesignThatMatters.org](http://DesignThatMatters.org).

**Media contact:**

Design that Matters, 1.877.820.8479