PODS: Equipping the community managers

A case study

What's inside?

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ASDSW always believes that the communities have their own innate strength and capacities, they need only to be empowered to influence the course of their situation. Rather than relying on intervention from external sources, they can be guided to develop their capacities for planning, implementing and managing WaSH services. Their personal involvement in the process, with their understanding of their own communities, they pool their resources, commit to finding solutions to their own problems in a more sustainable way.

In implementing a project, ASDSW has very minimal sway in choosing the participants to the capacity building component – gender, age, educational background, economic background, religion and some such considerations. However, what matters is the commitment to serve, offering their time, talents and skill to a common cause.

The People Offering Deliverable Services (PODS)

The PODS Training is an open invitation to the local leaders and other community members that are keenly interested in improving their access to safe water, basic sanitation and hygiene. This is skill building training spread over a period of 16 days, the participants are transformed into an organization with a business plan, ready to implement the proper water solution and technology, and is governed by an agreed set of policies and strategies, stressing the importance of good governance properties such as inclusion, transparency and accountability. This is a proven approach in equipping the simple community members to operate and manage a WaSH project, usually a water system, ensuring its sustainability and benefits to the community it is envisioned to serve.

The training is facilitated by ASDSW staff, carefully guiding the participants through its four (4) major components, as follows:

1. Direction Setting – includes Vision statements, personal and community dreams, Resource mapping, analysis and prioritization, organizational goals and objectives, water quality monitoring and importance of proper WaSH behavior in the households and community.

2. Business Planning and financial management – Reflection of personal entrepreneurial competencies, introduction to business planning, marketing, production, organizational and management and financial planning, introduction to basic financial management.

3. Crafting the policies, systems and procedures – policy making for systems and procedure within the organization, presentation of output to the general assembly for review, and finalization.

4. Development and sustainability planning- 2-year development planning, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

The training may seem basic, but one may be surprised that the some of the participants who were wait and see people or listeners, staying at the sidelines, suddenly become confident managers and leaders. It's so heartening to see people transformed because they were given a chance to harness their own innate capacities, skills and talents.

Kamuning Water System cooperative (KAWASCO)

Brief profile

Barangay Kamuning is a coastal barangay and is host to one of the biggest mangrove reservations in the province. It is a typical rural fishing-farming community with coconut and rice as the main crops and is home to some indigenous peoples from the Tagbanua tribe. The latest census (2016) indicated the population at 1,983. The barangay is listed as one of the poorest barangays in the city of Puerto Princesa. In spite of this, the barangay is now declared a zero open defecation (ZOD) community.

The water sources were mainly shallow wells fitted with handpumps but most of these wells have no water during the dry season. Most households bought purified water from the nearby Barangay of Inagawan for their drinking water because of dubious water quality from the shallow wells.
The cost is P40 per 20 liter per container.

The project



ASDSW, with funding from the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, implemented a water supply project in Kamuning in March of 2019. This project constructed 4 drilled wells complete with pumps, tanks, in-line chlorinator. The pumps are powered by electricity and is connected to PALECO. By the end of the project, it already served more than 180 household water connections. The envisioned target is set at 400 household connections.

Simultaneous with the technical implementation, the would-be operations & maintenance group were given the PODS training. In one of the sessions during this training, the group decided that they wanted to be a cooperative and so went to the Cooperative Development Authority to comply with the requirements of registering as a cooperative and legally operate their water services. Their registered name is KAWASCO Credit Cooperative. Four (4) plumbers were also trained to operate, maintain and repair the water system.

Operation and management



Since the completion and turnover of the project in 2020, the cooperative opened a bank account and able maintain cash balance of at least Php 60,000.00 per month. They also have their official receipts and are compliant with CDA requirements annually. The officers receive honoraria only when there is a meeting, and the plumbers only when they were called to make repairs. This is their way to ensure that their funds are not drained and money is available in case of any major operational expenses. In a sense, the officers are sacrificially serving just to ensure the continuous water service for the community. This group is a heterogenous group of professionals, IP members, housewives and senior citizens.

The recurrent brown-outs of PALECO negatively affected the water service operations in one of the puroks in their service area. Coupled with the drying out of the underground well in this area, this eventually led to the closure of water operation in this well, which also resulted to reduced water connection. Level 3 connections is down to 130 households. Moreover, the cooperative is just waiting for a buildup of funds to repair and improve this well because there are many cooperative members in this area.

In addition to maintaining the smooth operations of the water services, the cooperative is also able to meet the government mandated fees or shares as follows:

- 1% of the annual gross income to the IP group – roughly about P4,000.00 a year.
- 1% of the annual net income for Barangay's share – about P400.00.
- 1% of the annual net income for Purok's share – about P400.00.

It is so heartening to know that a small effort capacitating this group, they were able to fully manage their water service operation and also contribute to the development of their community. This resonates greatly to the ASDSW vision of "empowered communities taking responsibility to improve their quality of life and manage their resources and capacities".

Cabayugan Water Service Cooperative (CWSC)

Before the project

Cabayugan is among the ten (10) priority barangays identified by the City in piloting its WaSH Program. Despite this, Cabayugan remained a barangay with issues access to water particularly two of its eight (8) sitios – Manturon and Old Centro. These two sitios have a total of 240 HH population or about 1,041 individuals most of whom, work as farmers or in tourism-related industries.

These two (2) sitios share a twenty-year old water system. The system has only one serviceable tap stand evidenced by a queueing time of about two (2) hours. The water is contaminated with E. Coli as per the City Health Office 2018 report, a reason why community members resorted to purchasing drinking water at a monthly minimum cost of Php 1,500.00. In addition, those who cannot queue for lack of time or incapacity such as the single parent and elderly, spends an additional of Php2100.00 monthly for service delivery of the water for their domestic use.

The project

In 2020, at the height of covid-19 pandemic, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints provided funding for the Construction of Level 3 water system to serve these two (2) sitios, and capacity development for Operation and Maintenance. The project consists of the construction of spring box, installation of break-pressure tank and distribution networks and installation of in-line chlorination, along with PODS training for the operation and management of the completed water system. The water source is a spring, water is distributed by gravity.





Gains from the capacity building training

The project is envisioned to serve 240 households, comprising 27% of the population. Four (4) years after it was completed and turned-over to the trained O&M group, it is now officially a registered cooperative in the Cooperatives Development authority as Cabayugan Water Service Cooperative (CWSC), with their own official receipt, bank account and assets like a motorcycle which the meter reader uses when he's doing the readings. They have 4 plumbers and a total of 27 other officers, most of them receives monthly incentives of varying rates. The manager receives Php 5,000.00, Php 3,500.00 for the treasurer, Php 1,000.00 for the secretary and Php 1,700.00 each for the maintenance staff. They have a total of 163 connected

households and plans to expand services to sitio Dalampasigan in the near future, as funds become available. This will serve an additional 30 households.



The cooperative is able to do all these because they strictly implemented their policies in connection, collection and disconnection. Presently, they have more than P500k in bank. They have prepositioned supplies of most needed spare parts for repairs and have already received their physico-chemical analysis certificate and certificate of water potability from the health office of Puerto Princesa City. They charge a flat rate of Php 258.00/month for the first 10 cubic meters, and Php 16.00 for each additional per cubic meter used.

Water from the source is plentiful, expansion of water services is in the horizon and they are now able to send their officers to other capacity building trainings from their income so that they can continue to improve their service delivery.