

Monitoring Study and Strengthening of WASH Task Forces for the Advocacy on Well-Maintained Toilets and Wash Facilities in Schools

In a July 2010 resolution, the United Nations recognized the right to water and sanitation and acknowledged that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realization of all human rights. While drinking water, toilets and hand washing facilities are the most cost-effective public health measures, they have not been a priority for most developing countries... and in a lot of schools in the Philippines.

The WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Coalition Pilipinas is engaged in an advocacy campaign for well maintained toilets and wash facilities in schools. This campaign highlights the need for stakeholders at the national and local levels to coordinate, work together and harmonize efforts in a decentralized environment while considering the human, economic and social complexities unique to each province. The campaign is being carried out in 14 provinces of the Philippines: Masbate, Sorsogon, Tawi-Tawi, Agusan del Sur, Western Samar, Northern Samar, Eastern Samar, Occidental Mindoro, Kalinga, Capiz, Albay, Davao, Bohol and Leyte.

The WASH Coalition Pilipinas is a loose coalition of organizations, local governments, communities and individuals working with national and local policy makers as well as the poorest communities to improve the WASH situation in the Philippines through advocacy, awareness raising, multi-stakeholder partnerships, action research and capacity building. WASH Coalition Pilipinas is currently led by the non-government organization (NGO) Philippine Center for Water and Sanitation (www.itnphil.org.ph). The Coalition has regional chapters in Eastern Visayas, Davao, Bicol and in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

Objectives

1. To conduct a monitoring study on the advocacy efforts of existing WASH Task Forces undertaking campaigns for well maintained toilets and wash facilities in schools.
2. To assist in the strengthening process of existing WASH Task Forces
3. To initiate the formation of new WASH Task Forces that will carry out the local advocacy campaign for well-maintained toilets and wash facilities in schools.

Approaches

WASH Coalition Pilipinas promotes processes whereby the poor and the vulnerable do not get excluded. Advocacy efforts are viewed in relation to strengthening institutions and mechanisms to control corruption; enhancing accountability relationships and capacities amongst stakeholders; and calling for public policies supportive of effective and efficient service delivery especially to the poorest.

The Coalition recognizes WASH as mainstream media issues and rising public concerns capable of influencing decisions. Journalists and other media practitioners are invited to support the advocacy campaign for improved WASH situation in schools. The Coalition also works with local partners to help enhance people's understanding of the rights of access to information and to public participation in WASH service delivery.

WASH Coalition Pilipinas facilitates the formation and strengthening of WASH Task Forces, which lead the campaign for well maintained toilets and wash facilities in schools in their localities. The campaign is meant to build upon indigenous institutions as well as positive aspects about the people, the place, and the situation, thereby resulting in WASH facilities constructed or improved upon in the schools. Composed of representatives from various stakeholders, a WASH Task Force encourages increased participation from communities and works to make WASH service delivery more transparent and government agencies more accountable. The WASH Task Force also identifies schools and communities receiving sub-standard WASH services that urgently need action and improvement.

Activities from March to December 2011

| OBJECTIVE | ACTIVITY | PURPOSE | METHODOLOGY | OUTPUT | OUTCOME | INDICATOR |
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| To conduct a monitoring study on the advocacy efforts of 7 existing WASH Task Forces | Monitoring study on the course and outcome of the advocacy work of 7 WASH Task Forces established in 2010 in Leyte, Tawi-Tawi, Agusan del Sur, Masbate, Northern Samar, Western Samar and Sorsogon | Documentation of the WASH in schools advocacy campaign of 7 WASH Task Forces | Data gathering through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - focus group discussions (FGDs) - interviews, - site visits to 7 WASH Task Forces | Case study on the advocacy efforts of 7 WASH Task Forces established in 2010 | Lessons learned with regards to the advocacy campaign for well maintained toilets and wash facilities in schools of the 7 WASH Task Forces | WASH facilities built; mechanisms and policies brought about |
| To assist the strengthening process of 7 existing WASH Task Forces in Leyte, Tawi-Tawi, Agusan del Sur, Masbate, Northern Samar, Western Samar and Sorsogon | Strengthening of the 7 WASH Task Forces through capacity building sessions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - low-cost appropriate WASH technologies; - building partnerships for sustained WASH efforts - the way forward | Building the confidence of 7 WASH Task Forces to become dynamic WASH advocates | Lectures; FGDs; Sharing of experiences; Study tour or cross visits between and among WASH Task Forces | WASH Coalition website uploads for knowledge dissemination and sharing | Network of partners Synchronized call and other advocacy actions for the building of low-cost rainwater harvesting tanks in public schools in the Philippines. | Connectivity and collaboration for sustained WASH in schools advocacy |
| To initiate the formation of 7 new WASH Task Forces in Davao, Bohol, Albay, Eastern Samar, Capiz, Kalinga, and Occidental Mindoro | Identifying with local stakeholders some potential core group members to constitute the WASH task force in each of the 7 provinces | For the WASH Task Forces to eventually carry out the local campaign for well maintained toilets and wash facilities in schools in their localities | FGDs; Use of WASH advocacy and awareness raising materials produced by the WASH Coalition | 7 new WASH Task Forces established | Initial tasks agreed upon | Resolution from local government, or civil society organization (CSO), or school where the WASH Task Forces are lodged |

WASH Task Forces could be regarded as a movement fueled by hope. Water and sanitation – along with transport and electricity – are basic structures with poverty reducing impacts. WASH and the conservation, protection and rehabilitation of our environment and natural resources are the best socio-economic safety nets for our ecologically dependent and highly vulnerable communities.



WASH COALITION PILIPINAS

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