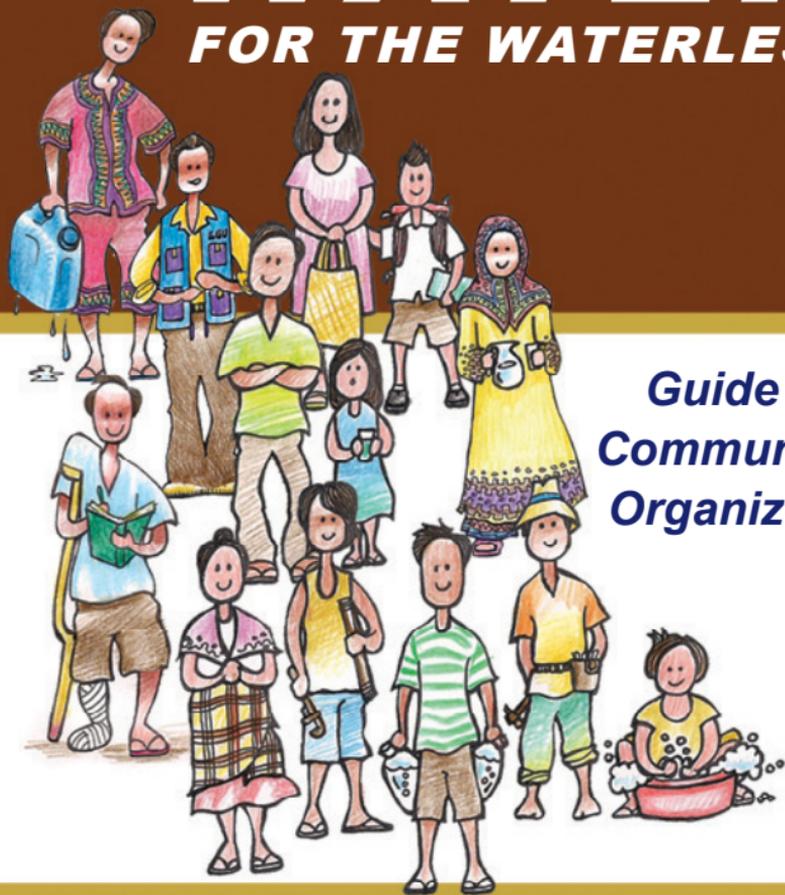


FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON

WATER

FOR THE WATERLESS



**Guide for
Community
Organizers**

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Community
Organizers***

Prepared by the
Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication
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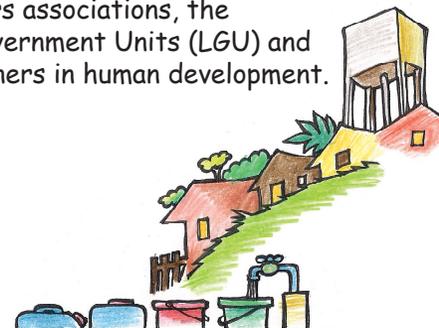
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INTRODUCTION

This pocket-sized booklet is designed to be a handy guide that will provide answers to frequently-asked questions regarding water and human health, its conservation and protection. Other questions include those pertaining to the human rights-based approach, the Millennium Development Goal Fund-1919 Programme (MDGF-1919) and the Sagana at Ligtas na Tubig sa Lahat (Salintubig) Program, and the Localized Customer Service Code of water users associations like the Barangay Water and Sanitation Association (BWSA).

This FAQ has been developed primarily for field use by community organizers, but may also serve as reference material for members of the water and sanitation (WATSAN) Councils and Teams, water users associations, the participating Local Government Units (LGU) and other interested partners in human development.



General Information on Water

Q What is safe drinking water or potable water?

A Water that is free of micro-organisms or disease-producing bacteria (pathogens), clear and without sediments, and does not have undesirable tastes, odors, colors, levels of radioactivity, or chemicals.

Q If the water is clear, does it mean the water is safe and clean?

A Not necessarily. Other than clarity, characteristics such as tastes, odors, colors and levels of radioactivity are also used to determine if water is safe and clean.



Q What is the importance of clean and safe water to us?

A Water makes up 70-75 percent of the body weight of the average human being. Every cell in our body needs water to live. Water helps to remove toxins or poisonous substances that our body takes in from the air, the food we eat and the chemicals we use on our skin and hair. Water also provides cushion for our body joints. Water carries oxygen and nutrients into all our cells. Water also helps to regulate our body temperature.

Q If we have abundant water resources here in the Philippines, why do we have to conserve water?

A Like all other natural resources, water is not unlimited. Water is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential in sustaining life, development and the environment. And with the changing climatic conditions, our water sources are in danger of drying up particularly during extreme dry seasons, and should be managed for the common good.



Q How do water and sanitation affect human health?

A Poor sanitation contaminates water sources that may lead to diarrhea and other water-borne diseases and that may in turn result to deaths if not given proper medication and care.

Q What are examples of poor sanitation practices?

A Examples of poor sanitation practices include improper washing of the hands, open defecation, "flying saucer" method, defecation in canals and bodies of water, defecation in open pits, and improper disposal of backyard livestock waste.

Q Why must we protect our water sources?

A We must protect our water sources for our health and safety. If we don't, we will be at risk of getting diarrhea and other water-borne diseases. We also must protect our water sources to ensure that water will still be available in the future.



Human Rights-Based Approach

Q What is the right to water?

A It is the right of every Filipino woman, man and child to clean, safe and affordable water.

Q If it is our right to have clean, safe and affordable water, why do we have to pay?

A While water is every person's right, the facilities and services that make water accessible entail essential cost. For example, expenses for maintaining the water system include parts replacement. Cost for services includes honorarium for the plumber or the person looking after the water facility. This is what you pay for as consumers of water.

Also, paying the water tariff allows government to promote, protect and fulfill the right to water without discriminating against any sector of society.

Q What other rights do we have?

- A**
1. Right to determine the type of water and sanitation services required and the manner these services should be managed.
 2. Right to be heard and consulted on water tariff and other matters that have impact on our welfare.
 3. Right to information or the right to seek, receive and impart information on water and sanitation issues.
 4. Right to participate or the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs and cultural life.
 5. Right to access service provided by government without discrimination.
 6. Right to peaceful assembly and association or the right to engage in concerted and peaceful actions and the right to get together with others for a common cause, without interference.

7. Right of reparation or the right to seek redress for a violation of a right.

MDGF-1919 Programme & Salintubig Program

Q What is the Government doing to address our water situation?

A Our Government is currently undertaking the Millennium Development Goal Fund-1919 Programme (MDGF-1919) and Sagana at Ligtas na Tubig sa Lahat (Salintubig) Program to provide water supply systems for the



waterless municipalities and enhance the capacity of the LGUs and water service providers in the management of water supply facilities.

Q What is the meaning of the number "1919" in the MDGF-1919 Program?

A The number 1919 stands for the number of the program proposal approved by the United Nations General Assembly.

Q When are these programs implemented?

A For MDGF-1919, from 2009 to 2012.
For Salintubig, from 2010 to 2015.

Q What is the coverage of these programs?

A The programs cover all 455 waterless municipalities. In 2011, the Program covered 115 waterless municipalities including 36 covered by MDGF-1919. For 2012, the Program will cover 135.



Q What are waterless municipalities?

A Waterless municipalities refer to those municipalities where less than half of the population have access to clean and safe water.

Q Who are the participants in these programs?

A Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Health (DOH), National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), Local Government Units (LGU), Municipal Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) Councils and Teams, local water users associations like the Barangay Water and Sanitation Association (BWSA), water service providers (WSP), and the waterless communities.



Q What are the major activities under these programs?

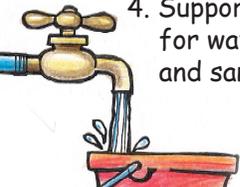
A Infrastructure development and capacity building.

Q What are the different levels of water supply facilities covered under infrastructure development?

A Level 1 includes spring, open dug well, hand pumps and rivers. Level 2 refers to communal tap stands and faucets. And Level 3 covers all piped connections to individual households.

Q What is involved in infrastructure development?

- A**
1. Rehabilitation, expansion or upgrading of Level 3 facilities, including water treatment systems
 2. Construction of Level 2 facilities, including water treatment systems
 3. Construction and rehabilitation of Level 1 facilities in areas where only these systems are feasible
 4. Support for new and innovative technologies for water supply delivery and sanitation systems



Q What is involved in capacity building?

- A**
1. Training for existing WATSAN Councils and newly organized water users associations and community-based organizations
 2. Mentoring, coaching and other capacity development assistance to LGUs on planning, implementation and management of water supply and sanitation projects
 3. Formation of WATSAN Development Council and water users associations

Q What are WATSAN Councils and Teams?

A The Municipal WATSAN Council is the overseeing and policy-making body on water and sanitation concerns and is headed by the mayor. The WATSAN Team is the implementing arm of the Council.



Localized Customer Service Code

Q What is the Localized Customer Service Code (LCSC)?

A The LCSC is a document that serves as a binding social contract and agreement between the water users association like the BWSA and its members for the provision of water service to its members. The Code reflects the aspirations of the association, the roles and responsibilities of the concerned parties and other provisions adopted by the association.

Q How was the Code formulated?

A The officers of the water users association, together with the Municipal WATSAN team, initially worked from a draft prepared by the National Water Resources Board (NWRB). They finalized the draft, based on the local situation of their barangay. This localized version was then ratified by members of the association.

Q What is the purpose of the Code?

A The Code serves as the guide of the association in operating and managing the water system.



Q What are water users associations and BWSA?

A A water users association (WUA) is an organization that primarily operates and maintains the community's water facility. The WUA may be a cooperative or an association of water users. The BWSA, or the Barangay Water and Sanitation Association, is one such organization.



Q What are the duties of members of water users associations?

A Every member shall comply with all policies and rules of the association. Specifically, each member shall:

1. Pay his/her bill on time;
2. Attend and participate in meetings and support activities of the association;

- provide feedback and make suggestions in order to improve water service;
3. See to it that the communal faucet/tap stand is well maintained and protected;
 4. Allow authorized staff of the association to perform necessary repairs in the communal faucet/tap stand, piping, and reservoir and water tub;
 5. Prevent wastewater of any nature, and see to it that the discharge of any wastewater shall be disposed of in such a manner that it will not compromise the health and safety of the community.
 6. Monitor the operations and maintenance of the water system; and
 7. Provide feedback and suggestions to improve water services.



- Q** Who determines how much water tariff shall be charged?
- A** The association determines the water tariff, in consultation with the members.
- Q** Who are the officers of the association?
- A** President, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and auditor. The officers may vary among the water users associations.
- Q** How are officers elected?
- A** Officers are elected in a general assembly every one to three years, depending on the association. Elective positions are open equally to men and women.

Tubig natin, Buhay natin!

OUR WATER, OUR LIFE!

