

## **FINAL REPORT**

### **Impact Study on Water and Gender: The Maguindanao del Sur Experience Philippines**



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## Acronyms

|                   |                                                                                                               |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ARMM              | Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao                                                                          |
| BARMM             | Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao                                                               |
| BLGU              | Barangay Local Government Unit                                                                                |
| CAB               | Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro                                                                     |
| CBO               | Community-based Organization                                                                                  |
| CDP               | Comprehensive Development Plan                                                                                |
| CEEP              | Community Emergency Employment Programme                                                                      |
| DILG - SALINTUBIG | Department of Interior and Local Government – <i>Sagana at Ligas na Tubig para sa Lahat</i>                   |
| DSWD DROMIC       | Department of Social Welfare and Development – Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center |
| EIIP              | Employment Intensive Investment Programme                                                                     |
| EMPINVEST         | Employment in Investments                                                                                     |
| GAD               | Gender and Development                                                                                        |
| IDI               | Individual Depth Interview                                                                                    |
| IFE               | Independent Final Evaluation                                                                                  |
| ILO               | International Labour Organization                                                                             |
| IP                | Indigenous People                                                                                             |
| LRB               | Local Resource Base                                                                                           |
| MBHTE             | Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education                                                            |
| MILF              | Moro Islamic Liberation Front                                                                                 |
| MLGU              | Municipal Local Government Unit                                                                               |
| MOLE              | Ministry of Labor and Employment                                                                              |
| NEDA              | National Economic Development Authority                                                                       |
| NHTS-PR           | National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction                                                     |
| O&M               | Operations and Maintenance                                                                                    |
| ODA               | Official Development Assistance                                                                               |
| OSH               | Occupational Safety and Health OSH                                                                            |
| PCW               | Philippine Commission on Women                                                                                |
| PD                | Presidential Decree                                                                                           |
| PTA               | Parents-Teachers Association                                                                                  |
| PWD               | Person with Disability                                                                                        |

|             |                                                                                                     |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| RDP         | Regional Development Plan                                                                           |
| RRPC        | Reina Regente Producer Cooperative                                                                  |
| SDG         | Sustainable Development Goal                                                                        |
| SGA         | Special Geographic Area                                                                             |
| SSS         | Social Security System                                                                              |
| TCES        | Timanan Central Elementary School                                                                   |
| TESDA       | Technical Education and Skills Development Authority                                                |
| TOR         | Terms of Reference                                                                                  |
| UN          | United Nations                                                                                      |
| UNESCO-WWAP | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – World Water Assessment Programme |
| USAID – GEM | United States Agency for International Development – Growth with Equity in Mindanao                 |
| WASH        | Water, Hygiene, and Sanitation                                                                      |
| WHO         | World Health Organization                                                                           |
| WISCON      | Work Improvement at Small Construction Sites                                                        |

## Definition of terms

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|                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Barangay</b>                     | Also known as village. In the Philippines, it is the smallest territorial and administrative unit forming the most local level of government. It has its own set of officials responsible for managing and providing services to the village/community.                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Community-Based Organization</b> | It is contracted through the <b>community contracting approach</b> of ILO – a tool that allows poor communities and low-income groups to formulate an agreement with a contracting authority to implement infrastructure works, and therefore function as a contractor. It is a form of sustainability mechanism which promotes a sense of ownership of a given development activity.               |
| <b>Local Government Units</b>       | The Philippines' local government structure consists of three levels: provinces and independent cities, component cities and municipalities, and barangays. These levels are collectively referred to as local government units (LGUs). Some areas have an autonomous region above provinces and independent chartered cities, such as the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). |
| <b>Municipality</b>                 | It is the official term for a town within a specific political jurisdiction under a province.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Sitio</b>                        | Derived from the Spanish term for "site". It is a rural enclave within or outside a barangay/village.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Subproject</b>                   | It forms part of a bigger project or constitutes crucial aspects of a larger project.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

## Executive Summary

This study highlights two main aspects: a) Analysis of the impact of the project interventions and based on the findings, derive issues, and draw lessons that are useful in rural water policy, employment creation, and infrastructure development; and b) Analysis of the success factors presented in a systematic manner, emphasizing how women and other vulnerable groups were included and continue to benefit from the project. The results are expected to support the goals of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and significantly contribute in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

Through the Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) implemented the water system project in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) designed to help alleviate poverty in communities prone to conflict through improved access to safe and reliable water supply and sanitation services. It was implemented for two (2) years and eleven (11) months, starting in April 2019 and concluding in March 2022. Eleven (11) water systems were completed, benefiting 6 701 households (Hhs) and 6 115 school-aged children. A total of 1 249 individuals were provided employment, of whom 308 (25%) are women, 10 (1%) are persons with disability (PWDs), and 90 (7%) are former combatants. The Community Emergency Employment Programme (CEEP) benefited 2 027 informal workers in the form of wage transfers and social protection mechanisms. The water system project and CEEP provided employment opportunities to 3 276 individuals, inclusive of 898 (27%) women, 434 (13%) indigenous peoples (IPs), and 1 223 (37%) ex-combatants.

The impact study generated the following results: a) provided adequate and safely managed water services to three (3) schools, benefiting an average of 2,100 students annually, and 427 households across three villages; b) brought safe drinking water closer to homes and schools, contributing to SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2; c) reduced weekly expense for drinking water, thereby optimizing household budget for food and other expenses; d) eliminated harmful organisms and impurities through the integration of chlorinator in the water utility's design, resulting in reduced water-borne illnesses; e) inclusion of women and girls, PWDs, and IPs in accessing affordable and quality water; and f) established Community-based Organizations (CBOs) and built their capacities in maintenance and sustainability of the water system project. Lessons learned highlight the need to: a) bridge gender data gaps by having standardized data sets that would allow cross-country comparison and quick assessment of contributions in achieving the SDGs on WASH and gender; b) prioritize women's involvement in all aspects of the project, from planning to implementation, and further in sustaining the water facility; c) transform water associations into professional organizations, with support from local government units.

Moving forward, the following are key actions to consider: 1) Bridge the water and gender data gap by dedicating resources for collection of high quality, timely, and reliable data to permit participation and contribution to the global assessment, monitoring, and reporting of progress specifically on SDGs 5 and 6; 2) Conduct a parallel study to develop and/or enhance ILO's implementation framework that highlights the connections between water, gender, social inclusion, and peace, and the development of a comprehensive 'theory of change' in conflict-prone settings; 3) Conduct a follow-up impact study with a wider project scope to capture the higher-level transformation occurring in the community after 2-3 years, and determine the contributions made toward achieving SDGs 1, 3, 5, 6, and 10; 4) Improve programme and project delivery by defining and integrating relevant, universally defined and endorsed impact indicators at the outset of implementation to suffice efficient tracking of progress and contribution to the achievement of SDGs 2030 on water and gender.

## 1.0 Background

With decades of documented presence in over 50 countries globally, the ILO, through EIIP, has implemented a range of interventions: long-term employment-intensive public works investment schemes and short-term emergency employment projects. The EIIP is responsible for executing ILO's work in linking inclusive infrastructure investments, employment creation, and poverty reduction. It promotes local resource-based (LRB) approaches, including the use of employment-intensive work methods. It uses the employment lens in building capacities and improving community assets while at the same time contributing to environmental protection, social cohesion/inclusion, and gender empowerment.<sup>1</sup> Across its interventions, it has adopted diverse strategies and approaches. However, its overarching thematic focus remained unchanged: optimizing local resources, creating decent employment, capacity-building, optimizing productivity, and ensuring the quality of work.

### *EIIP in the Philippines*

The EIIP has actively supported several employment-intensive public works programmes to support the creation of decent job opportunities in the Philippines targeting vulnerable regions, oftentimes as a development collaboration work with the government and at times as a response to a crisis or economic shocks in the country. In 2017, data from the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) indicated 455 municipalities across the country identified as waterless or where 50% of the households have no access to safe and reliable water supply. It further cited that of the 455 municipalities, 94 or 20.6 % are in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) provinces. The Regional Development Plan (RDP) 2017-2022 of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) which preceded BARMM, affirmed the same urgency for water security by expanding the coverage of water systems through rehabilitating/upgrading existing water systems and providing new systems in waterless areas. It further calls for parallel interventions with government programmes on hygiene and sanitation. The ILO, aiming to support country priorities, appropriately responded through the "Improvement of Water Supply Equipment Management Capacity for the Establishment of Peace in Mindanao" project with funding support from the Government of Japan. The project supported the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically, SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

### *EIIP project in BARMM*

Implemented for two (2) years and eleven (11) months, the project started in April 2019 and ended in March 2022. It was designed to help alleviate poverty in communities prone to conflict in the BARMM through improved access to safe and reliable water supply and sanitation services. The local resource-based tools<sup>2</sup> were utilized during the project implementation: **Local level planning** (community participation in identifying and prioritizing projects); **Labour-based methods** in construction (skills transfer to the workers); **Community contracting** (local residents were organized, mobilized, and trained for the construction works); and **Operations and Maintenance (O&M) of community infrastructure** (tailored as potential income source for residents). The labour and employment standards were adhered to as well as gender specific approaches and inclusivity mechanisms were

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<sup>1</sup> ILO EIIP Guidance. Dated 5 May 2020. Accessed 25 June 2023. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_743537.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_743537.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> ILO Concept Note on the Improvement of Water Supply Equipment Management Capacity for the Establishment of Peace in Mindanao Project. (pg. 8)

applied during the implementation. The priority areas were originally both the mainland and island provinces of BARMM. However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak and its consequent declaration as global pandemic in March 2020 by WHO<sup>3</sup>, the Project reduced its coverage to the mainland areas of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, and (Special Geographic Areas (SGAs)<sup>4</sup> of North Cotabato. With concurrence from the donor, the resources that were allocated for the island provinces were repurposed<sup>5</sup> to implement the Community Emergency Employment Programme (CEEP)<sup>6</sup> in partnership with the MOLE.

By the end of the project, the following were accomplished<sup>7</sup>:

- 1) **Water Project:** eleven (11) water systems were completed benefiting 6 701 households (Hhs.) and 6 115 school-aged children. A total of 1 249 individuals were provided employment of which 308 (25%) were women, 10 (1%) were persons with disability (PWDs), and 90 (7%) were former combatants. Further, nine (9) community contractors were capacitated to construct eleven (11) water system structures. The O&M plans were also developed. The water infrastructures were structured such that they are easily utilized and maintained, demonstrating a strong likelihood of sustainability.
- 2) **Occupational Safety and Health (OSH):** Certification training on construction (Safety Officer-2 and Safety Officer-3) was provided for 10 MOLE staff, four (4) community contractor safety officers and two (2) implementing partner engineers – selected participants were introduced to the Work Improvement at Small Construction Sites (WISCON) approaches which was also rolled out with the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE) in three (3) sub-project sites in Balabagan, Lanao del Sur.
- 3) **CEEP:** The repurposed funds were used in the emergency employment benefiting 2 027 informal economy workers in the form of wage transfers and social protection mechanisms (namely SSS, PhilHealth, and work accident insurance).

Both the water project and CEEP have provided employment opportunities to 3 276 individuals inclusive of 898 (27%) women, 434 (13%) indigenous people, and 1 223 (37%) ex-combatants.

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<sup>3</sup> WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Accessed 3 July 2023. <https://time.com/5791661/who-coronavirus-pandemic-declaration/>

<sup>4</sup>The SGA encompasses a total of 63 barangays across six municipalities in the province of Cotabato, Philippines. Despite the province of Cotabato being a part of the South Cotabato-Sultan Kudarat-Sarangani (SocSKsargen) region, the SGA is under the jurisdiction of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

<sup>5</sup> ILO Terminal Report of the Improvement of Water Supply Equipment Management Capacity for the Establishment of Peace in Mindanao Project. Dated 30 June 2022. (pg.4)

<sup>6</sup> This provided emergency employment to informal economy workers who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative was compliant with the decent work standards of ILO: provided social protection (SSS, PhilHealth and accident insurance); established WASH facilities to promote good hygiene practices; and employed COVID-19 responsive Occupational, OSH standards in the workplace.

<sup>7</sup> ILO Terminal Report of the Improvement of Water Supply Equipment Management Capacity for the Establishment of Peace in Mindanao Project. Dated 30 June 2022. (pg.5-6)

The Independent Final Evaluation (IFE) of the Project conducted from February to March 2022 underscored its strong performance in each of the following criteria<sup>8</sup>: **Relevance and coherence** (aligned with relevant national and regional government policies specifically on the provision of water and sanitation services. In the global context, the project aligned with SDG 6 *Clean Water and Sanitation*, SDG 8 *Decent Work and Economic Growth*; and SDG 16 *Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*. Indirectly, it has contributed to SDG 3 *Good Health and Wellbeing*, and SDG 5 *Gender Equality*); **Effectiveness** (made significant progress towards the achievement of its planned outputs and associated outcomes); **Efficiency** (demonstrated a sound approach to the allocation and management of financial resources and associated inputs); **Sustainability** (demonstrated elements of sustainability through establishment of sense of ownership and responsibility for outputs and outcomes); and **Impacts** (in terms of short-term job creation, inclusion of decent work, and promotion/inclusion of social protection measures). It also affirmed the application and integration of gender-specific approaches at all stages of the project implementation.

Further, the IFE provided recommendations<sup>9</sup> that are critical for the longer-term sustainability of the project and similar projects implemented by ILO and the replicability of the approaches and strategies that worked best in similar contexts. Two of the recommendations signified the impetus for the conduct of this impact study on water and gender: **Recommendation number seven (7) -Conduct impact assessments and evaluation studies** on all future infrastructure projects as part of an overall strategy to raise the importance of such endeavors and to collect and present data and information for assessment, transparency, and future learning; and **Recommendation number four (4) - To document “the story” of the project** as a means to promote the approaches employed and highlight key achievements – add to the knowledge base for EIIP replication and use as communication and information materials for other donors that are doing similar works or are interested in supporting rural development in the same region

Crucial to this impact study is the utilization of a gender and inclusion lens that highlighted the participation of women and other marginalized and vulnerable groups in the ownership, maintenance, and management of the project remnants. This entailed drawing out their “stories of change” reflective of how the project has benefited not only men and boys but women and girls as well, including Indigenous People (IP) and People with Disabilities (PWDs) in the community. It would be worth sharing with a larger audience how the project went beyond providing skills training, livelihood opportunities, and access to safe and reliable water sources, but also giving women and other vulnerable groups a voice to assert their rights (and dignity) and break socio-cultural barriers that relegate women and girls to traditional gender roles.

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<sup>8</sup> ILO Independent Final Evaluation for the Improvement of Water Supply Equipment Management Capacity for the Establishment of Peace in Mindanao Project. March 2022. (pg.5-8)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. (pg.10-11)

## 2.0 Purpose, analytical framework, and scope

### 2.1 Purpose

Cognizant of two recommendations in the IFE previously mentioned, this impact study aimed to highlight the following:

- Analysis of the impact of the project interventions and based on the findings, derive issues, and draw lessons that are useful in rural water policy, employment creation, and infrastructure development.
- Analysis of the success factors presented in a systematic manner, emphasizing how women and other vulnerable groups were included and continue to benefit from the project.

### 2.2 Analytical Framework

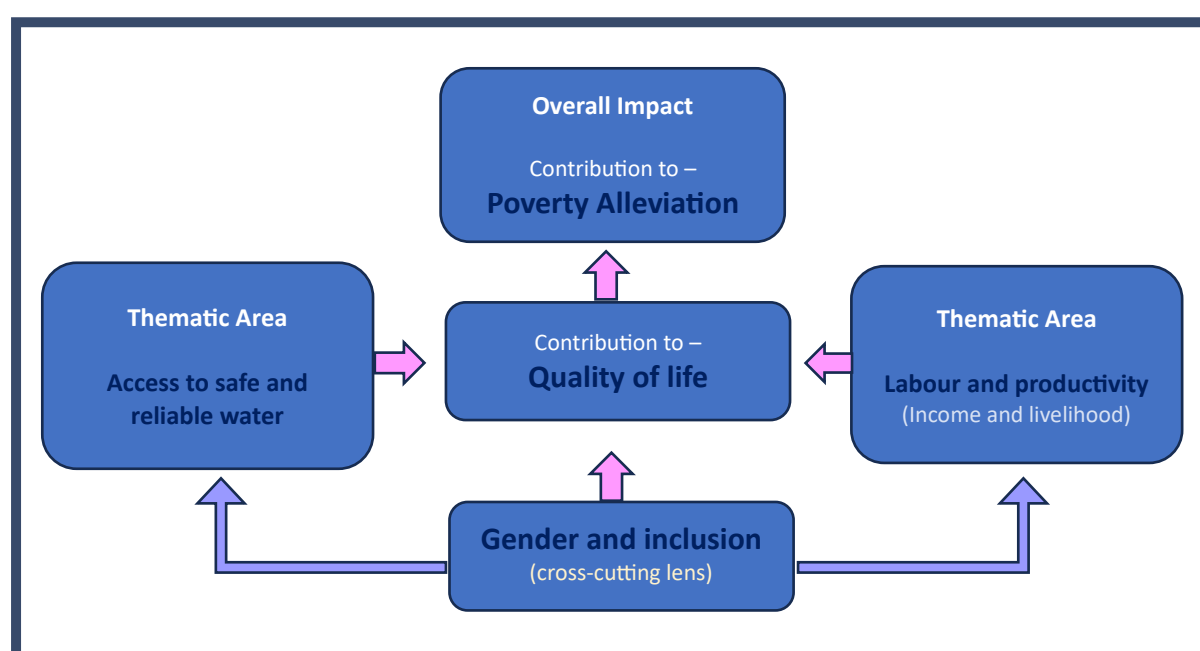
Cooperrider and Fry's appreciative inquiry (AI)<sup>10</sup> was adopted as the over-arching approach that guided the conduct of this impact study. This type of inquiry model utilizes a positive lens to draw out the strengths of a given system (and interventions) and how they are leveraged to function effectively and sustainably. It is operationalized in this study in terms of highlighting the "stories of change" and pointing out where and how the impact occurred in the following key thematic areas: a) Access to safe and reliable water, and b) Labour and productivity. The term "impact" as defined in this study pertains to the continuous benefits derived from the project interventions through the subprojects. The latter comprised the small projects of a bigger ILO project. As used in this study, these refer to the small water systems that were provided to the community-beneficiaries.

In developing the framework for this study, the Theory of Change (ToC) of EIIP was revisited. As the water project involved multiple dimensions, the review helped in outlining the context and establishing the causal links of the critical indicators (i.e., access to water, labor, and productivity) and how their contribution to poverty alleviation is exhibited. The framework is anchored on the EIIP agenda for infrastructure investment with the goal of enhancing the quality of life and reducing poverty. Further, the framework defines labour as a function of employability, where employment is an input for asset creation which in turn articulates skills transfer as one aspect for ensuring the quality of the utility. Further, the skills transfer sets the condition to attainments at the outcome and impact levels: a) long-term asset maintenance through O&M processes led by capable community-based associations/organizations, and b) enhanced skills for increased employability and livelihood. Additionally, productivity is approached through opportunities for a more beneficial use of time saved arising from the asset created.

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<sup>10</sup> Based on research by David Cooperrider and Ronald Fry, where the model of inquiry and analysis uses positive approach – focuses on the good aspects of systems and organizations. <https://www.davidcooperrider.com/ai-process/>.

**Figure 1:** Schematic diagram of the study framework



**On access to safe and reliable water sources:** This involved a descriptive analysis of how the community beneficiaries maintained and continued to benefit from the constructed water system. Good practices are laid out, specifically answering what differences occur (before and after) and with what effect.

**On labour and productivity:** The task involved extracting the "stories of change" from the direct beneficiaries of the skills training. These stories focused on how they utilized their acquired knowledge and skills to find employment or increase their income. Additionally, the necessary conditions that were met linking productivity with water access were also explored, especially in terms of time saved vis-à-vis the increase in their productivity.

The preceding key indicators are subjected to further analysis in the context of the project's contribution to enhancing the quality of life of its direct beneficiaries to support poverty alleviation. The project is studied through a gender and inclusion lens, which examines the level of participation of women and other vulnerable groups, such as IPs and PWDs, in the management and maintenance of the water system. Furthermore, the analysis looked into how the project has empowered these groups to claim their rights to participate and benefit equally from the project's achievements.

This study concluded with the issues and challenges related to impact areas. Lessons learned and policy implications are drawn for future programming and replication of interventions in similar contexts.

## 2.3 Scope

This study focuses on the subprojects that were implemented using the EIIP approach in the Municipalities of South Upi and Datu Piang in the Province of Maguindanao del Sur, BARMM, Philippines, purposively selected for this exercise.

**Table 1. Subprojects under study**

| Name of Subproject    | Location                                                  | Type of source | Date of completion |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Level II Water System | Barangay Romongaob<br>South Upi, Maguindanao del Sur      | Spring         | 4 March 2021       |
| Level II Water System | Barangay Looy<br>South Upi, Maguindanao del Sur           | Spring         | 15 July 2021       |
| Level II Water System | Barangay Reina Regente<br>Datu Piang, Maguindanao del Sur | Ground         | 28 February 2022   |

**\*\*A barangay (village) is the smallest political unit in the Philippines comprising the cities and municipalities (towns). Provinces of the Philippines are divided into municipalities and cities, which in turn are divided into barangays.**

**\*\*\* In this study, the terms barangay and village are used interchangeably, as well as the terms municipality and town. Additionally, the terms 'subproject/s' and 'water system/s' are utilized interchangeably to refer to the Level II water system, which is commonly known as communal faucet system or tap stands. This system consists of a source, a reservoir, a piped distribution network, and communal faucets where users or beneficiaries can collect water.**

In determining the inclusion of subprojects for this study, **contiguous villages** within a province are given priority which further meets the following crucial considerations:

- **Distance and accessibility:** In terms of distance, the subprojects located not more than 100 kilometers from the ILO field office in Cotabato City, BARMM, Philippines are selected. Further, in consideration of the start of the rainy season in June, subprojects with easily accessible roads that are not susceptible to flooding were given priority. This decision was made to ensure minimal disruptions caused by the adverse weather conditions during the field visits.
- **Safety and security:** Given the current volatile peace and order situation in BARMM, subprojects situated in relatively more peaceful areas were accorded priority. It was deemed prudent to adopt a cautious approach keeping in view the safety and security of those involved in the data collection activities for this study.
- **Inclusion of mixed groups:** The subprojects must demonstrate the inclusion of mixed groups, comprising women, children, ex-combatants, IPs, and PWDs. This is to ensure that all groups are well-represented and heard.

## 3.0 Methodology and Limitations

### 3.1 Methodology

This impact study primarily employed qualitative methodology to present a case write-up, supported by the following data collection tools:

Desk review: This involved the review of relevant documents to obtain general background and contextual information about the project and the selected subprojects. The complete list of references and data that were reviewed is included herewith as **Annex D**.

In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) and Mini-group Interviews (MGIs): IDIs were employed (face-to-face and telephone interviews) with key informants, specifically for inquiries that are sensitive and for getting a full/in-depth scope of the thematic areas under study. MGIs (two to six individuals) were conducted among direct beneficiaries in collecting primary data and in capturing success stories that will feed into the development of communication and information materials, promoting the EIIP approach specific to gender and water nexus. A total of 24 people were interviewed (14 females and 10 males), comprised of a) Community-Based Organization (CBO) members and officers; b) direct beneficiaries; c) former project staff (manager and engineer); d) Local Government Unit (LGU) representatives (**Annex C** – List of respondents). A set of questionnaires developed during the inception phase of this impact study guided the inquiries, attached as **Annex B**.

Fieldwork: The fieldwork was conducted from 31 July 2023 to 4 August 2023 – a total of five (5) days. Two days for preparatory works (first day) and exit meeting cum IDI with the project staff (last day). Three (3) days for the actual site visits to the barangays, conducted from 1 to 3 August 2023 (one barangay per day) – the allocation was only for single-visit interviews and photo-documentation per subproject under study. The respondents were purposively selected based on their availability and convenience given the tight field work schedule with some flexibility through follow-up phone interviews.

Perception score: This tool was utilized mainly to facilitate understanding and visualization of how highly the respondents view a given indicator (in terms of satisfaction level) according to their experience and how they perceive results and performance. It was not used as basis for providing a quantitative analysis.

### 3.2 Limitations

This is not designed to be a thorough, all-encompassing study, but rather a case analysis of what can serve as a basis for elaboration/improvement of water and gender programmes and projects in the future. The processes (the how) and reasons (the why) things happen as they do hold as ascribed only in the experiences of the three barangays covered by this study. The results may reflect different generalizations about the interventions in other areas covered by the project.

On single site visits and group interviews: Given the constraints on time, the extraction of information from the respondents was done judiciously. A structured questionnaire was crafted that guided the primary data collection. While some data gaps remained, this was addressed through follow-up phone interviews. However, these interviews did not yield the same level of detail that would have been attainable through a focus group discussion (FGD).

On the mix of respondents: The questionnaire was designed for interviews with CBOs, Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) or village leaders, and direct beneficiaries. However, some of these groups were not adequately represented. In particular, during the site visit in Barangay Reina Regente, there were difficulties in coordinating and gathering people for the small group interviews. As a result, only two respondents were interviewed.

On resources: Due to constraints in both time and funds, conducting a focus group discussion (FGD) and household survey was not feasible. However, the former project manager and water engineer were able to draw on their respective expertise and experience to provide a comprehensive understanding of the project context. Furthermore, reviewing the existing project reports aided in overcoming limitations in perspectives and judgment.

## 4.0 Key results

This section comprises three (3) case studies that illustrate the experiences of the beneficiaries of the subprojects in the following villages: Romongaob and Looy in the town of South Upi, and Reina Regente in the town of Datu Piang. Each case narrative is organized following the thematic areas specified in the analytical framework for this study.

### 4.1 Access to clean and reliable water

Under this thematic area, the narrative entails a description of what took place before and after the water project implementation touching upon three aspects: Key issues concerning water, O&M and sustainability mechanisms, and the experiences of the direct beneficiaries. The conditions are set out, for perspective, to better understand the “whys” and the “hows” the beneficiaries maintained and continue to harvest gains from the constructed water system.

#### 4.1.1 The Barangay Romongaob Experience

##### Village context

Romongaob is a village located in the town of South Upi with a population of 16,856 individuals<sup>11</sup>. The population is predominantly composed of the IP Teduray tribe, with a negligible disparity in the ratio of males (8,110 or 48%) to females (8,746 or 52%) residing in the area.

It is the political center and business hub of South Upi. Out of the 11 villages under its jurisdiction, this urban village is the most populous, accounting for 25% of the total population.

It encompasses 24 sitios or small territorial enclaves within the village. The village center, known as Timanan, is where the ILO implemented the Level II water system subproject, specifically at the Timanan Central Elementary School (TCES).

The municipality of South Upi was founded in the early 1960s, following the efforts of educated Tedurays who had formed the Teduray Welfare Association and several Chieftains. These individuals petitioned for a separate municipality for the Teduray people, with the goal of preventing them from being gradually displaced from their native land. After more than a decade of self-determination struggles, President Ferdinand Marcos signed P.D. 1011, which created South Upi on 22 September 1976. Prior to its establishment as a separate municipality, South Upi had been part of the local government unit of Upi.

The etymology of the name "Romongaob" can be traced back to the Teduray language, where "rēměgoab" means a sound similar to thunder. The name's origin is attributed to the early inhabitants of the area who used a Fetak (an ax) to cut down Lawaan, a type of hard wood. The sound produced during the felling of the tree was remarkable and echoed across nearby villages. The river where the tree fell was then named Romongaob, and the name was later given to the place.

This anecdote highlights the cultural significance of the area and offers insight into the history of the Municipality. The use of the Teduray language emphasizes the importance of indigenous cultures and their contributions to the region's heritage. The story also suggests the significance of the natural environment to the community and how it is intertwined with their

<sup>11</sup>Barangay Profile of Romongaob (2015)

## A. Water access before the project

Before the 1940s, Romongaob was characterized by an abundance of potable water sources. The local population relied on wells, springs, and rivers to fulfill their water needs. However, the quality of the water has deteriorated significantly over the years due to contamination from pesticides and waste materials, slash-and-burn farming practices, indiscriminate garbage disposal, and pollution. Moreover, the water yield has declined due to deforestation, denudation, and the loss of trees in the watershed areas.

**Table 2. Perception on water access in Romongaob, before the project**

| Indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1 being the least satisfactory and 5 being most satisfactory |   |   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Availability</b> (can fetch without having to wait)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 1                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Accessibility</b> (easy to reach, easy to use)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 1                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Quality and acceptability</b> (tested for safe drinking)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 1                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Affordability</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 1                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <p><b>Issues concerning water access</b></p> <p><b>Availability:</b> The distance required to collect water from deep wells or springs varied depending on the location of the houses of the residents. Women (particularly mothers) and children were typically responsible for water collection on most days, bearing the brunt of this task. To collect as much water as possible, they would frequently rise as early as 3 a.m. to queue at the nearest water source. Children as young as six years old would be tasked with carrying a one-liter containers in each hand, while mothers would carry at least two 4-liter containers. The distance they had to travel to collect water ranged between 500 meters and 7 kilometers, depending on the collection point. Queueing was particularly bothersome at sources of drinking water. Occasionally, adult males would start lining up at 10 p.m. waiting until midnight or dawn to ensure that they could collect enough water for the following day. On average, residents spent between 30 minutes to six (6) hours daily collecting water. On weekends, they often visited rivers such as Marugao, Kinitaan, and Malibacao to wash clothes and swim. This became a "picnic day" of sorts, where they shared food and socialized with friends and family.</p> <p><b>Accessibility:</b> Most of the water points were accessible by foot or by motorized vehicles, such as single motorcycles. The terrain of the area was marked by mountains and undulating hills, while the road surfaces were often treacherous. During the wet season, the road surfaces could be slippery, while the dry season renders them rough and unstable, creating a potential hazard for vulnerable populations, including young children, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, and senior citizens.</p> <p><i>Conflicts arising from water access:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Queueing: Instances of conflict often arose while individuals were queuing for water, particularly when a person had multiple large containers to fill. This action had a significant impact on the water source, leading to limited availability for those in the queue. Also, disputes arose over the perceived order of those waiting in line at the water source. Students found themselves in a precarious position of having to choose between attending the flag ceremony or their first subject class and collecting water.</li> <li>2) Water theft: There have been reports of theft of collected water at the source, specifically from unattended, filled containers.</li> <li>3) Axing of pipelines: Envy can lead some individuals to engage in acts of sabotage against pipelines, either by intercepting the source or rerouting the flow to their own property.</li> </ol> |                                                              |   |   |   |   |

**Quality and acceptability:** There were anecdotal claims of diarrheal disease mainly affecting children, and skin diseases affecting adults and children. While the water from sources was not regularly tested for potability, the adult residents claimed that they somehow developed immunity against water impurities.

**Affordability:** Some individuals are willing to pay a fee of PhP10.00 (US\$ 0.18) for each 18.9-liter container of safe drinking water to be collected on their behalf. Meanwhile, mothers and families with young children typically chose to purchase distilled water at PhP25.00 (US\$ 0.45) per 18.9-liter container.

**\*\*US dollar (US\$) to Philippine peso (PhP) conversion in this study is pegged at US\$1.00 = PhP55.00**

**Attempts to bring water closer to people:** Efforts to install a water system in the village have been ongoing for years. In 2006, the United States Agency for International Aid – Growth with Equity in Mindanao (USAID-GEM) project provided a Level II water system that was designed to be a potable water source. Since then, the Municipal Local Government Unit (MLGU) has been responsible for operating and maintaining the facility, which remains to date a vital source of safe drinking water. However, this system only covers the enclave at the center of the village, leaving the rest of the constituents in other enclaves to collect water from untreated wells, springs, and rivers for drinking and domestic uses such as cooking, cleaning, bathing, and washing.

In 2014, the MLGU started the construction of the Level II water system under the *SALINTUBIG* Programme of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). This programme provides financial assistance and capacity development to build water supply systems in areas without access to water. It helps the Local Government Units (LGUs) plan, implement, operate, maintain, and manage water supply facilities sustainably.<sup>12</sup> The construction finished in 2017. Consequently, the MLGU of South Upi improved the water system to Level III (individual house connections). The preceding water source was designated solely for household use and was not deemed potable. Furthermore, its coverage area was limited. This resulted in a dearth of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities, particularly in the Timanan Central Elementary School (TCES), thus presenting a challenge to the well-being of the students.



The TCES is a government-owned instructional facility that offers basic education to children aged 5 to 13 years old. Managed by the Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education (MBHTE), the regional executive department of the BARMM responsible for educational affairs, the TCES provides Kindergarten and elementary education to an average of 1,100 learners every school year. Its strategic location made it the ideal venue for the District Meet<sup>13</sup> - an annual inter-school scholastic multi-sport competition in the province of Maguindanao del Sur.

In the past, attendees of the District Meet had faced challenges regarding access to adequate water supply for personal hygiene. There were hygiene-related concerns such as limited opportunities for bathing and difficulty in maintaining the cleanliness of the toilets.

- TCES teacher, 56 years old

Since the beginning, the TCES was pervaded with key challenges: Lack of water access for drinking and cleaning; Inadequate sanitation facilities to promote good hygiene practices and health education, and

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.dilg.gov.ph/PDF\\_File/issuances/memo\\_circulars/dilg-memocircular-2016112\\_ac2f782080.pdf](https://www.dilg.gov.ph/PDF_File/issuances/memo_circulars/dilg-memocircular-2016112_ac2f782080.pdf). Retrieved on 15 Aug 2023

<sup>13</sup> This is a lower meet competition that leads to the *Palarong Pambansa*, a national athletic contest of champions qualified from lower meets such as intramurals, division, regional, and pre-national qualifying rounds.

lack of appropriate facilities to promote health education (oral hygiene, proper handwashing, menstrual hygiene management for adolescent girls), and difficult toilet maintenance and cleanliness.

In 2016, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued Order No. 10 s. 2016 titled ***Policy Guidelines on the Comprehensive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools (Wins)*** Program which introduced the essential requirements and standards that schools should have access to and implementation procedures for healthy routines to keep learners healthy and fit for learning.<sup>14</sup> The guidelines outline the country-context standards for Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) for Schools – a global initiative of UNICEF to promote children’s right to access safe drinking water and WASH services while at school. The inclusion of WASH in Schools in the Sustainable Development Goals (targets 4 and 6) highlights the increasing recognition of their importance as key components of a safe, non-violent, inclusive, and as part of universal WASH access, underpins WASH beyond the home.<sup>15</sup>

Every school day, it is compulsory for each student to bring at least one gallon of water in the morning and another gallon in the afternoon, which we use for drinking, handwashing, and toilet cleaning. We collect the water from the nearest available water point or any other water source we come across while en route to school. Sometimes we face long queues at the source, which causes us to arrive at school later than anticipated. Water fetching is much more challenging during rainy days, when the paths to the water source become muddy and slippery.

-TCES student, 11 years old

The school's inability to meet the ***Wins*** requirements and standards was primarily attributed to the lack of water access, which posed a significant challenge. This presented an opportunity for the ILO water project to collaborate with BARMM to enhance the learning environment of educational institutions in the region.

## B. Water access after the project

The table below provides a summary of the project contributions in Romongaob, particularly in the TCES. The description of the subproject’s status is derived from the primary data collected during the field visit.

**Table 3. Summary of project contributions in Romongaob**

| Project Contributions                                                   | Status as of July 2023                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | PERCEPTION SCORE<br>(1 being the least satisfactory and 5 being most satisfactory)<br>**based on the perception rating of the respondents |   |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 1                                                                                                                                         | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Rehabilitated and improved 1 intake box                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reported issues that required repairs</li> <li>No leaks, cracks, or faults</li> </ul>                                                                                                                     | 1                                                                                                                                         | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Constructed 1 elevated concrete tank with solar-operated chlorinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reported issues that required repairs</li> <li>No leaks, cracks, or faults</li> <li>The chlorinator machine is fully functional</li> <li>With sufficient chlorine supply for the next 6 months</li> </ul> | 1                                                                                                                                         | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Installed 9 120 m water pipes for the supply and distribution line   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reported issues that required repairs</li> <li>Pipes were buried knee-deep beneath the surface – to ensure that the pipes remained inaccessible to both</li> </ul>                                        | 1                                                                                                                                         | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

<sup>14</sup> OUA Memo 00-0921-0015 Memorandum, 31 August 2021: WASH in Schools Program Recognition Process for the Awarding of Seal of Excellence 2021

<sup>15</sup> <https://data.unicef.org/topic/water-and-sanitation/wash-in-schools/>

|                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |   |   |   |   |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
|                                                                                                                                                                                              | foraging animals and planting equipment in cropland areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. Constructed 5 tap stands                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most of the minor repairs involved replacing worn-out faucets, which were frequently used and had become damaged over time.</li> <li>The surrounding tap stand area exhibits no visible pools of muddy water, owing to the efficient drainage of wastewater.</li> <li>The tap stand platform is clear of debris and dirt that could obstruct drainage.</li> <li>Sufficient water supply 24/7</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Provided piped water supply for each classroom toilet and five (5) washing areas                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reported issues that required repairs</li> <li>Sufficient water supply 24/7</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Improved WASH facilities in the school                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each classroom now has a toilet for boys and girls with individual taps generating potable water.</li> <li>There are five (5) washing areas located around 50 meters away from the kindergarten area and about five (5) meters away from the playground and parents' hub.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Community-Based Organization (CBO)<sup>16</sup></b>                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7. Trained a CBO for management and maintenance of the water system<br><br>**The TCES Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) is a CBO in Romongaob that is tasked with the O&M of the water system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The primary role of the TCES-PTA is the collection of user's fees – fund management, record-keeping, and budget preparation (monthly repair expenses and honorarium of the water tender).</li> <li>Women officers of the PTA have major responsibilities in fund management (the secretary, treasurer, and auditor are all women).</li> <li>Annual collections are made for water fees from each student at a rate of PHP50 (US\$0.91). At present, only half of the fees from the past academic year have been collected, with the remaining 50% to be collected in the current academic year.</li> </ul> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Facilitated the crafting of policies and rules for responsible water use                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The O&amp;M policies are established and actively enforced</li> <li>There is no gender bias or discrimination in water access and management of the water system.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Local Government Units (LGUs) – town and village levels</b>                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 9. Facilitated involvement of the LGUs in the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) of the water system                                                                                           | <p><b>Town level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The MLGU oversees the O&amp;M of all the water systems through the Municipal/town WASH council.</li> <li>The Municipal Engineering Office is tasked to oversee/guide the routine maintenance of the water system.</li> <li>The town Mayor plans to consolidate the management and maintenance (including expansion) of all the Water Systems in the barangay to become the South Upi Water District in the future. This remains to be seen.</li> </ul> <p><b>Village level</b></p>                                                                                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS\\_165347/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS_165347/lang--en/index.htm).

\*\*A CBO is contracted through the community contracting approach of ILO – a tool that allows poor communities and low-income groups to formulate an agreement with a contracting authority to implement infrastructure works, and therefore function as a contractor. It is a form of sustainability mechanism by promoting sense of ownership to a given development activity.

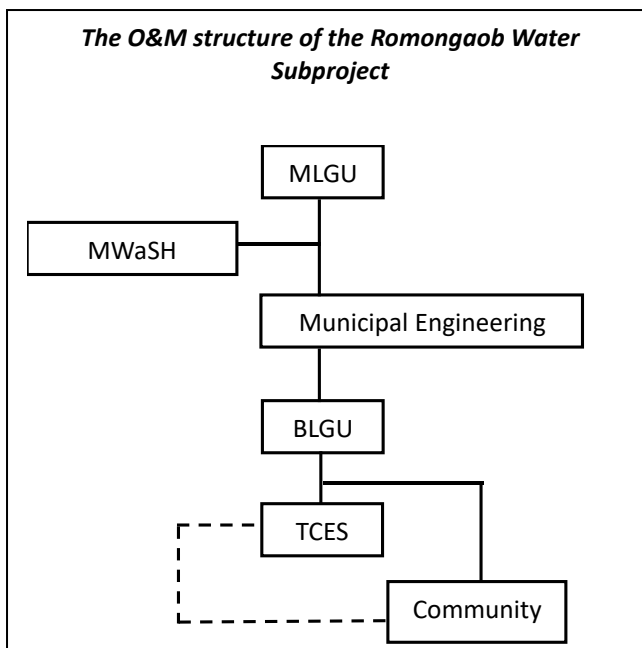
|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BLGU is responsible for the settlement of minor conflicts and minor maintenance of the water system. Any reported abuses are settled by the BLGU council.</li> <li>• The BLGU is further responsible for the regular monitoring, specifically of the tap stands located outside of the school's premises.</li> <li>• The BLGU appointed a water caretaker (paid monthly) tasked with the routine maintenance of water taps outside the school premises</li> </ul> |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|

## C. Findings

### i) O&M and sustainability mechanisms

The water system is currently working efficiently and being properly maintained. The MLGU is responsible for managing all the O&M activities related to the facility. To ensure the sustainability of the subproject, the Municipal Council issued **Ordinance No. 2021-11 titled "An Ordinance on the Operation and Maintenance of TCES Water System Level II Project"** on 28 June 2021. The ordinance was duly adopted by the village council, and it is expected to be posted at every tap stand to inform the public. Although the posting has not yet been made at every tap stand, the household beneficiaries are aware of the regulations and are compliant. Among the regulations are a) Water is for drinking purposes only; b) Washing and bathing is prohibited at the tap stand area; and c) Bringing working animals such as carabaos near the tap stand is strictly prohibited.

Maintenance of the subproject is divided between the BLGU and TCES-PTA. The BLGU oversees tap stands outside the school premises while TCES-PTA is responsible for those within. Maintenance comes in two types – preventive/routine and corrective. Preventive maintenance is planned and ongoing, involving regular inspections of the water source, intake box, distribution pipelines, elevated tank or reservoir, tap stands, and water quality monitoring. To accomplish this, the school hired a water tender who is responsible for conducting routine maintenance of the water system within the school. The water tender was trained by the Municipal WASH technician in



@ ILO / A. Origenes  
Handwashing area in the TCES.

proper desilting and cleaning of the reservoir or water tank and ensuring proper water flow. The same water tender was also responsible for the proper mixing of water chlorination. On the other hand, the BLGU-paid caretaker is responsible for the preventive maintenance of the water posts outside the school. Corrective maintenance is carried out only when there are significant defects in the water system that require repairs. Additionally, the BLGU is responsible for managing minor conflicts related to water access that may arise in the community, including instances of water consumption abuse. It also oversees the small maintenance of facilities that require funding, ensuring they remain functional and safe for use by the beneficiaries.

The TCES-PTA is entrusted with the crucial tasks of collecting user fees and managing funds. Per the O&M policy, students who are currently enrolled in a school year are required to pay a user fee. Conversely, households that access water from the taps located outside the school premises are granted free access to water for now since the MLGU is still in the process of completing the water users' register in preparation for its future goal of consolidating the water systems in the town. The TCES-PTA's administrative functions are primarily carried out by women with skills in record-keeping and monitoring of operational expenses. These expenses typically include repairs, cleaning, and disinfection of pipelines and reservoirs, replacement of tools and parts, procurement of chlorine liquid, and engagement of skilled workers for major repair works as required.

## ii) Direct beneficiaries

The subproject played a pivotal role in enabling TCES to achieve compliance with the WinS and receive the Recognition Award for meeting the national standards for WASH and proper health practices. Additionally, the subproject served as a key element in establishing TCES as the first model of a learning center and hub for inclusive education services in BARM (complete narrative under Story of Change 1).

For the academic year 2022-2023, the subproject catered to 1,132 learners (550 females and 582 males). Currently, there is no official record of households using the tap stands outside of the school. The BLGU has estimated that approximately 100 households are accessing the taps, with coverage extending to the teachers' village and the entire village center. The MLGU has an official register of water users solely for its non-potable Level II water system project.

### District meet after the Water Project

The TCES hosted another District Meet in February 2023. Over 1,000 participants from 38 elementary schools and 5 junior/senior high schools in Maguindanao del Sur Province attended the event, marking the first large gathering after the pandemic. The availability of a readily accessible water source made a significant difference in ensuring a smooth and successful event. Maintaining the toilets was an effortless task, and bathing, washing, and cleaning was no longer cumbersome. Access to 24/7 safe and potable water was unlimited, which relieved the event organizers of the challenging responsibility of keeping the venue conducive to a large-scale event.

A comprehensive study using a household survey tool is necessary to assess the impact of the subproject on the improvement of WASH conditions at the household level. This will provide a better understanding of the extent of improvement and determine whether it can be directly attributed to the project.

## Story of change 1:

### The Ripple Effect

The installation of the water system is crucial in the efforts of the TCES to meet the necessary criteria for obtaining opportunities to further improve the standards of its educational services. This is demonstrated through the achievement of the three-star level under the WASH in Schools (WinS) Program<sup>17</sup> which then paved the way for the establishment of the first model of an inclusive learning hub in BARMM.

**The three-star award:** The DepEd has adopted the Three-Star Approach, which incorporates an integrated system for quality assurance, monitoring, and merit-based rewards for the WinS Program on a national scale. The subproject in the TCES has been instrumental in significantly improving the school's ability to meet the national WinS standards, culminating in the achievement of a three-star level. In 2021, the TCES was honored with the **Recognition Award** under the WinS Recognition System for successfully meeting the national standards, which signifies accomplishing 75 to 100% of WinS Indicators.

**The inclusive learning hub:** The Inclusive and Supportive Center for Learning (ISCL) was launched on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023, marking a significant milestone in the provision of inclusive education services in the BARMM. The ISCL is a model learning center and hub that is committed to delivering efficient and effective education governance and services through the MBHTE-Inclusive Schools Approach. The center aims to provide all learners with relevant and responsive education, including those with disabilities, those who have been displaced by conflict, and those from far-flung communities. This is rooted in the region's commitment to “leave no Bangsamoro child behind.”



@ ILO / A. Origenes  
The ISCL hub.



@ ILO / A. Origenes  
Elevated water tank in the TCES

<sup>17</sup>The DepEd WinS Program aims to promote the learning and health outcomes of Filipino students by implementing a comprehensive, sustainable, and scalable school-based WASH program. This is in line with the State's obligation to protect the rights of children to dignity, assistance, and protection from conditions that may hinder their development. The WinS Policy or DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2016 titled Policy and Guidelines for the Comprehensive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools (WinS) Program was issued 19 February, 2016.

Furthermore, it caters to students enrolled in the Alternative Learning System (ALS)<sup>18</sup>. The Australian Government provided funding for the ISCL, in partnership with the DepEd and the MBHTE. Additionally, a new building was constructed exclusively for the ISCL's pursuits, programs, and activities, demonstrating a commitment to supporting inclusive education in the region.

The ISCL hub was established, and the three-star award was attained through a synergy of different development-oriented actors. It all started with the improvement of WASH in the TCES through the subproject.

#### 4.1.2 The Barangay Looy Experience

##### Village context

Looy is a small rural village under the jurisdiction of South Upi, with a projected population of 4,243 for the year 2022. At present, there is no available sex-disaggregated data, as its Barangay Development Plan (BDP) is yet to be updated. Looy previously served as the original political seat of South Upi before it was established as a separate municipality in 1976. However, with the issuance of Presidential Decree (PD) 1850 amending PD 1011, Romongaob has since replaced Looy as the permanent political seat of the town.<sup>19</sup>

☼♦☼

The name 'Looy' was derived from the tree known as 'Luwey', which was highly esteemed by travelers from North Upi en route to South Upi, due to the tree's comfortable and cool shade. Over time, the locals began to refer to the area as 'Looy', and the name was eventually adopted as the official name of the Barangay.

☼♦☼

#### A. Water access before the project

In 1942, a population of approximately 20-30 families resided in Looy. The settlement was initially comprised of only three (3) sitios, but as time progressed, another four (4) sitios were established. Like Romongaob, the inhabitants of Looy relied on the collection of water from pristine rivers, springs, and deep wells. Nevertheless, the water quality from these sources was compromised over the years resulting from logging activities, slash-and-burn techniques, and inorganic farming practices. Furthermore, the water at the source was contaminated by pesticides that leached through the surroundings.

**Table 4. Perception on the water sources in Looy, before the project**

| Indicators                                             | 1 being the least satisfactory and 5 being most satisfactory |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Availability</b> (can fetch without having to wait) | 1                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Accessibility</b> (easy to reach, easy to use)      | 1                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

<sup>18</sup>In the Philippines, there is a parallel learning system known as ALS which offers a practical alternative to formal education. This system is particularly useful for individuals who do not have access to traditional school education. ALS incorporates both formal and informal sources of knowledge and skills

<sup>19</sup> BDP for Looy (as of 2015)

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quality and acceptability (tested for safe drinking)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Affordability                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <p><b><u>Issues concerning water access</u></b></p> <p><b>Availability:</b> The residents are confronted with the challenging task of procuring water due to long queues that begin as early as 2 a.m. Some individuals choose to spend the night near the water point to ensure that they obtain their share, while the mountainous terrain leading to the water points exacerbates the predicament. The water points accessible to them are deep wells and springs located at a considerable distance. Those who choose to forego queuing would rather walk 2-4 kilometers to obtain water from the Malibacao River. School-going children must queue before attending classes to satisfy the minimum 2-liter water requirement per student per day. This is in addition to their routine task of collecting water for household use.</p> <p><b>Accessibility:</b> The steep elevation leading to the deep well, commonly referred to as the "<i>balon ng bayan</i>," presented difficulties for those with mobility challenges, including children, pregnant women, senior citizens, and PWDs. The access road to the well becomes slippery during the wet season, making it a hazardous path to navigate. Alternative spring sources are located at distances of one kilometer from the village center. These sources are accessible only on foot and require anywhere from 30 minutes to two (2) hours of travel time, based on the individual's pace and load capacity. Women and children require more time to obtain water from these sources. On weekends, the residents travel/walk four (4) to seven (7) kilometers to the Malibacao River to wash clothes since the available water sources in the village center are inadequate.</p> <p><i>The disputes that ensued from the accessibility to sources mirrored the experience of Romongaob:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Queueing: Instances of conflict emerged during the process of queuing, as individuals grew increasingly fatigued and irritable due to the uncertain length of the wait. Some individuals would brazenly interject themselves ahead of others in the queue, resulting in confrontations.</li> <li>2) Water theft: This problem occurred when individuals left their water containers unattended in the queue. Subsequent individuals seized the opportunity to take the previously filled containers, while the original owners fetched for more water.</li> <li>3) Negatively affecting school time: On occasions, parents raised concerns with teachers regarding their children being denied attendance to classes on account of not having brought the prescribed two (2) liters of water to school.</li> <li>4) Cutting of pipelines: In certain instances, land proprietors redirect the path of water pipelines that traverse their lands to suit their specific needs.</li> </ol> <p><b>Quality and acceptability:</b> Skin and diarrheal diseases affect both adults and children. Despite water potability test results declaring that the water was contaminated and unsafe for drinking, the residents would still fetch water from those sources for lack of other viable alternatives.</p> <p><b>Affordability:</b> Where private water providers were the only option for availing clean water, some households purchase them at PhP200 per drum (US\$3.61 per drum which is commonly filled to 200 liters of water). Other households paid a fee of PhP15 (US\$0.27) per 18.9-liter container to individuals who collect water for them.</p> |   |   |   |   |   |

***Attempts to bring water closer to people:*** Based on the recollections of the respondents, the previous water utilities that were provided to the barangay included a rainwater catchment tank and reservoir with five (5) tap stands around the year 2005, and a jet pump in the year 2013. Due to unclear O&M procedures, these utilities did not last. Consequently, the residents had to resort to sourcing water from springs and wells for their daily domestic and drinking water needs.

The inclusion of the village in the ILO water project priority list has effectively addressed the primary constraint for WASH improvement in schools, much like the case of Romongaob. This development reflects a significant advancement in the region's ongoing efforts toward sustainable WASH solutions particularly in schools.



The Looy Elementary School and the Looy Integrated Technical Vocational High School are situated on the same premises in the village center. The Elementary School caters to kindergarten and elementary learners aged 5 to 12 years old, while the Vocational School caters to high school learners aged 13 to 17 years old. Both institutions are owned by the government and managed through the MBHTE.

Like the TCES, these schools require support in meeting the national standards for proper hygiene and sanitation practices. This support is critical in maintaining a clean and conducive learning atmosphere that is essential for the health and well-being of the students.

## B. Water access after the project

The following table provides an overview and status of the subprojects in the village, specifically in Looy Elementary School and the Looy Integrated Technical Vocational High School. The information is obtained from the primary data collected during the field visit.

**Table 5. Summary of project contributions in Looy**

| Project Contributions                                                 | Status as of July 2023                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | PERCEPTION SCORE:<br>1 being the least satisfactory and 5 being most satisfactory<br><br>**based on the perception rating of the respondents |   |   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 1                                                                                                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Rehabilitated and improved 1 intake box                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs repair, was damaged by earthquake</li> <li>Leaks in intake conduit</li> <li>Repair works have been temporarily halted due to inaccessibility issue with the access road.</li> </ul>                                                              | 1                                                                                                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Constructed 1 ground concrete tank with solar-operated chlorinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reported issues that required repairs</li> <li>No leaks, cracks, or faults</li> <li>Chlorinator machine is fully functional</li> <li>With sufficient chlorine supply for 1 year</li> </ul>                                                          | 1                                                                                                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Installed 9 120 m water pipes for the supply and distribution line | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pipes traversing landslide-prone and mountainous areas were exposed</li> <li>During land preparation for planting, pipes crossing agricultural lands are at risk of unintentional damage by passing farm animals.</li> </ul>                           | 1                                                                                                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Constructed 11 tap stands                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor repairs involved replacing worn-out faucets due to frequent use</li> <li>Tap stands and platforms are well maintained</li> <li>Sufficient water supply</li> <li>Regulated fetching hours daily: 5 a.m. to 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.</li> </ul> | 1                                                                                                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. Provided piped water supply for each classroom toilet in elementary school and communal toilets (1 for boys and 1 for girls).<br><br>Provided piped water supply for handwashing area with three (3) taps in high school and communal toilets (1 for boys/1 for girls) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor maintenance is required for the handwashing taps. The faucets need to be replaced. These taps are temporarily closed during the school break.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Improved WASH facilities in the schools                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each elementary school classroom has access to clean/potable water and a private toilet. There are also communal toilets available for visitors.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Community-Based Organization</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7. Trained a CBO for management and maintenance of the water system<br><br>***The Ke'Minanam-Luway Wayeg Association (KLWA) is the CBO in Looy that currently manages the water system                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The water association has a well-defined leadership structure and roles.</li> <li>The leaders exhibit a high level of proficiency in their efforts to ensure strict compliance with the rules by all users.</li> <li>Regular meetings are held, and all water users are required to attend.</li> <li>To register as a new member of the association, seedlings for one fruit tree and one regular tree are required (for planting at the water source).</li> <li>The tap stands are solely for purposes of water collection (bathing or laundry are prohibited).</li> <li>Punitive measures are enforced for any unauthorized tampering with pipes (PhP5,000 or US\$ 90.90 in cash on top of labour costs and materials).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Facilitated the crafting of policies and rules for responsible water use                                                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The O&amp;M policies are enforced with strict adherence.</li> <li>The members are listed according to the tap stand they belong to, with each tap stand being assigned a leader who is responsible for maintaining records.</li> <li>Water users are required to register and are subject to a monthly fee of PhP100 (US\$1.82) per household. Each household should consist of only one family. However, for those with extended families, the monthly dues are multiplied based on the number of families residing under the same roof.</li> <li>Individuals who are not registered officially are required to pay a fee of PhP50 (US\$ 0.91) per month if they intend to access the water posts. Every month, the tap stand leader collects fees and remits them to the CBO treasurer on the 25th.</li> <li>The schools charge each student a fee of PhP100 (US\$1.82) for the academic year.</li> </ul> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Local Government Units – town and village levels</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |   |   |   |   |   |
| 9. Facilitated the involvement of the LGUs in the O&M of the water system                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p><b>Village level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The BLGU may provide funding support for repair works exceeding the CBO's financial capacity. Although the CBO remained financially stable in the past two years of operation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Town level</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

|  |                                                                                                                        |  |  |  |  |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MLGU prioritizes the expansion of water coverage in Romongaob.</li> </ul> |  |  |  |  |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|

## C. Findings

### i) O&M and sustainability mechanisms

The KLWA manages and supervises the preventive and corrective maintenance of the water system. There are two designated caretakers tasked with preventive maintenance: one oversees the intake box whilst the other acts as a reservoir controller. During fetching hours, the reservoir controller ensures the system is switched on and off as required and monitors the chlorine levels to maintain the safety and quality of the water.

Each tap stand is assigned a tap stand leader responsible for ensuring that routine maintenance is carried out regularly. The water management team, comprising officers of the KLWA, provides oversight for all tap stands. Any water-related issues are promptly reported to the president of the water association. Currently, there are 19 tap stand leaders, comprising 14 females and 5 males with 1 PWD. For now, these individuals provide their services voluntarily and do not receive any form of remuneration. In recognition of their efforts, they are granted an exemption from the monthly user fee. The water association is currently assessing the possibility of appropriating a monthly stipend for the tap stand leaders.

As for the corrective maintenance required on the damaged intake box, the KLWA officer reported that it has been temporarily halted due to the heavy rainfall experienced in the region over the past month. The road leading to the intake box has become inaccessible due to landslides and flooding. However, all the necessary materials have already been procured, and the required manpower has been allocated for the repair work. Once the repair work is complete, the exposed pipes will be traced and reburied at an appropriate depth. Despite this, it is worth noting that all the water utilities are currently functioning optimally.



@ ILO / A. Origenes  
One of the 19 fully functional tap stands in Looy.

To date, the KLWA has achieved a significant milestone by expanding its water coverage to more households. The addition of nine (9) new tap stands to the existing 11 provided by ILO has led to increased water coverage in the area. The KLWA has extended its water services to four (4) out of the seven (7) enclaves in the village. Notably, the funding for this expansion was derived from the revenue

generated during the water association's first year of operation. *(Complete narrative under Story of Change 2)*

As a member of the grievance committee, the BLGU has a very specific role in the management and operations of the water project. It is responsible for resolving major water-related disputes, such as illegal tapping from the source, intentional damage to the distribution lines or tap stands, and other violations of the water-use policy. The MLGU on the other hand is involved in providing technical assistance and carrying out major repair works beyond the capacity of the KLWA and BLGU.

## ii) Direct beneficiaries

The subproject primarily serves the schools in the area. For the academic year 2022-2023, it catered to 1,104 students (541 males and 563 females) from kindergarten, elementary, and high school. Additionally, 20 tap stands serve 218 households and 20 non-registered water users. At present, the water system provides coverage to 57% of the enclaves in the village, equivalent to four out of seven enclaves.

As previously mentioned, to precisely attribute any improvements in household WASH, a household survey is required to be conducted.

## Story of change 2:

### Community-based water association

The KLWA is a community-based organization that strives to enhance water accessibility for the local population. Its name is derived from three Teduray words, Ke'Minanam, Luwey, and Wayeg, which signify water source, Looy, and water, respectively. The group entered into a contract with the Bangsamoro Development Authority (BDA), which was the Implementing Partner of ILO in the water project, for the execution of works through community contracting.



***"It was difficult at first. Our roles were new to us. But we accepted the challenge because we cannot allow the opportunity of having access to potable water pass by."*** – KLWA treasurer



When the project was handed over in June 2021, the team readily assumed the responsibility of managing the overall operations and maintenance of the water system. They established policies to ensure the seamless continuation of the water association's affairs. In a concerted effort, the water users were organized into clusters based on their respective tap stands, and a tap stand leader was appointed to collect user fees, maintain the water tap and platform, and promptly report any issues.

The KLWA celebrated a notable milestone on 21 July 2022, marking its first anniversary. The commemoration commenced with a tree-planting event around Ke'Minanam, a significant water source. Subsequently, a celebratory party was held, featuring the presentation of awards to



@ ILO / KLWA

*The KLWA officers and tap stand leaders with the water tank from ILO at the background.*

recognize excellence in user fee collection, tap stand maintenance, and beautification of water points. The beautification activities were initiated by the tap stand users themselves, who found it to be a valuable exercise in reinforcing their sense of ownership of the subproject and strengthening their sense of community and camaraderie.



@ ILO / KLWA

*Tree planting activity at Ke'Minanam water source.*

***“Fun and memorable celebration. It fueled our resolve to do more so that those who are not reached by the water project will also enjoy what we have now.” – KLWA BOD***



### **Women at the center of the O&M**

The presence of female leadership has played a vital role in ensuring the proper maintenance and care of the subproject. Their contribution to effectively implement water policies and regulations cannot be understated. Their unwavering commitment to their duties, characterized by firmness, assertiveness, and promptness is highly commendable. They maintain meticulous records of their collections, ensuring that remittance is made accurately and on time. In situations where minor water-related disputes arise, the women tap leaders can deftly resolve them. It is noteworthy that, out of the 19 tap stand leaders, 14 (74%) are women.

### **Further expansion**

Over the past two years, the KLWA has made significant strides in expanding water coverage to previously underserved enclaves in the village. Through prudent management of funds generated from its water operations, it has successfully added nine (9) taps to serve far-flung enclaves. The water association remains committed to achieving village-wide water service coverage in the future.

As of this writing, a local church leader has sought assistance from the KLWA in constructing tap stands for a Level II water system and installing the relevant pipe network from the designated water source. The primary objective of the project is to provide water access to 20 households situated in a remote area in the village inhabited by Tedurays, an IP tribe. The KLWA has positively responded to the request. This scenario effectively showcases the proficiency of the specialized skills instilled in the water association through the ILO training programme. Consequently, they have become capable of performing the necessary tasks associated with the installation of a water system.



***“We will extend our services because it is about water.  
It matters to us because we know first-hand what it is like to have none.” – KLWA president***

### 4.1.3 The Barangay Reina Regente Experience (MILF Camp)

#### Camp context

After seventeen years, the peace negotiations between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) concluded through the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro (CAB) by the two parties on 27 March 2014. To further concretize this agreement, the Republic Act (RA) No. 11054 “An Act Providing for the Organic Law for the BARMM,” was signed into law on 27 July 2018. This marked the transition of the defunct Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) into the BARMM, the new political entity.<sup>20</sup>

The CAB framework outlines Normalization as vital to the peace process. The document titled- Annex on Normalization, signed on 25 Jan 2014, expounds on the process for the laying down of weapons by the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF), the non-state<sup>21</sup> armed group of the MILF, and their transition to civilian life. As part of the programme for normalization is the provision of support for the combatants and non-combatant elements of the MILF, the families of the decommissioned combatants, and other vulnerable individuals, encompassing those residing in the six (6) recognized MILF camps in the region.<sup>22</sup>



@ ILO / A. Origenes  
*Elevated water tank at the MILF Camp in Reina Regente.*

The MILF camp in Reina Regente is within the political jurisdiction of the town of Datu Piang. The latter is one of the outer core areas<sup>23</sup> of Camp Omar ibn Al-Khattab, the biggest MILF camp among the six recognized major camps.

#### **A. Water access before the project**

There is limited documentation on the origins of the MILF Camp before the water project intervention. The project pre-feasibility information of ILO cited that it is home to both active and ex-combatants,

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<sup>20</sup> BARMM Philippines. 2<sup>nd</sup> Bangsamoro Development Plan 2023-2028, p.7

<sup>21</sup> BARMM Philippines. Camps Transformation Plan 2021-2026, pg. 11

<sup>22</sup> Philippines. Executive Order No. 79, Implementing the Annex on Normalization Under the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, signed on 24 April 2019 by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte. pg.3

<sup>23</sup> BARMM Philippines. Camps Transformation Plan 2021-2026, pgs. 11, 23 (An outer core area is municipality/ies where populations and institutions are more diverse, but BIAF or MILF operations affect the population in some ways).

as well as their respective families. The camp occupies only a portion of the barangay, the latter being profiled as one of the 16 villages comprising the town of Datu Piang with no access to potable water.

**Table 6. Perception on water sources in the MILF Camp, before the project**

| Indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 1 being the least satisfactory and 5 being most satisfactory |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Availability</b> (can fetch without having to wait)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 1                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Accessibility</b> (easy to reach, easy to use)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 1                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Quality and Acceptability</b> (tested for safe drinking)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 1                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Affordability</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 1                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <p><b><u>Issues concerning water access</u></b></p> <p><b>Availability:</b> The camp occupants had no access to clean drinking water, and therefore relied solely on the extraction of water from deep wells. These wells served as the primary source of drinking water and were also used for household tasks, including cooking, doing laundry, and cleaning, among others.</p> <p><b>Accessibility:</b> The designated water points were situated between 200 to 300 meters from the center of the camp and could be accessed by foot or motorized vehicle. These water points were susceptible to flooding.</p> <p><b>Quality and acceptability:</b> There was no specific health data for the main cause of illness in the camp. However, according to the project pre-feasibility information of ILO, acute water diarrhea is one of the top four causes of illness in the entire town of Datu Piang.</p> <p><b>Affordability:</b> Potable water is available for purchase at the town center, located 2-3 kilometers away from the camp, for a price of PhP30 (US\$0.55) per 18.9-liter container. The cost of transportation to the town ranges from PhP20-30 (US\$0.37-0.55) per person.</p> |                                                              |   |   |   |   |

The village lies in the eastern part of the Liguasan Marsh, the largest marsh wetland in Mindanao. This area is situated near the Rio Grande De Mindanao, which is the second-largest river system in the Philippines. As a result of its proximity to the heavily silted river, the village experiences flooding at least two to three times annually. This has led to low living standards in the camp, with residents lacking access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities. This dire situation has resulted in children and households being at constant risk of illness, with limited access to medical care. Given these challenges, any water-dependent transformation efforts were difficult to initiate.

The rationale behind the implementation of the water project in the camp was distinct from that of the water projects in Romongaob and Looy. The primary objective was to support the transformation efforts of the BARMM government in the camp. Camp transformation is critical to the normalization efforts, and the water project is a significant step toward achieving that goal.

## **B. Water access after the project**

The proceeding table presents a detailed overview of the subproject's status, based on the primary data that was collected during the field visit.

**Table 7. Summary of project contributions in the MILF camp**

| Project Contributions                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Status as of July 2023                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | PERCEPTION SCORE:<br>1 being the least satisfactory and 5 being most satisfactory<br><br>**based on the perception rating of the respondents |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1                                                                                                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Constructed 1 elevated concrete tank with solar-operated chlorinator                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reported issues that required repairs</li> <li>No leaks, cracks, or faults</li> <li>The chlorinator machine is fully functional</li> <li>With sufficient chlorine supply for the next 6 months</li> </ul>                                                                                                                   | 1                                                                                                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Installed 3 660 m water pipes for the supply and distribution line                                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reported issues that required repairs</li> <li>Some pipes that connect the source to the taps are exposed and visible</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                            | 1                                                                                                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Constructed 4 tap stands                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A single leaking tap is causing water spillage indicating the need for immediate faucet replacement</li> <li>Tap stand platforms need cleaning to prevent drainage blockage</li> <li>The vicinity surrounding the water posts needs garbage clearing</li> <li>Continuous and uninterrupted water supply</li> </ul>             | 1                                                                                                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Improved access to potable water                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>89 households are currently benefiting from the water project</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1                                                                                                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Community-based Organization</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                              |   |   |   |   |
| 5. Trained a CBO for management and maintenance of the water system<br><br>**The Reina Regente Producer Cooperative (RRPC) is the CBO that helped in the subproject implementation through the community contracting approach of ILO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RRPC is currently not involved in the O&amp;M of the water system, but rather in agricultural-related affairs.</li> <li>Initially, a monthly fee of PhP1 (US\$ 0.02) was collected from each household user. Subsequently, the RRPC chairperson decided to discontinue the collection of fees from the water users.</li> </ul> | 1                                                                                                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Facilitated the crafting of policies and                                                                                                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water access and usage regulations are currently unavailable, thereby permitting bathing and washing clothes at water posts.</li> <li>All individuals residing in the camp are granted equitable and impartial access to water resources.</li> </ul>                                                                           | 1                                                                                                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Local Government Units (LGUs) – town and village levels</b>                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                              |   |   |   |   |
| 7. Facilitated involvement of the LGUs in the O&M of the water system                                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The MLGU and BLGU were not directly involved in the O&amp;M of the water system and no interventions were made following the project.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                               | 1                                                                                                                                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## C. Findings

### i) O&M and sustainability mechanisms

The elevated concrete tank and solar chlorinator are both in optimal condition and all water points, except for one tap requiring a minor repair, are functioning as intended, providing ample potable water. Notably, the subproject was designed with utmost consideration for environmental factors, specifically avoiding flood-prone areas.

The RRPC Chairperson takes responsibility for the management and maintenance of the water system. The Chairperson is also a leader within the camp who makes decisions regarding territorial affairs. The RRPC officers convene meetings, with a focus primarily on the cooperative's agricultural business pursuits rather than the water system's upkeep and management.

Many of the camp occupants work in the informal sector as farm laborers. Some rely on fishing, charcoal production, and selling firewood to make a living. The RRPC chairperson ceased collecting water fees due to the difficult financial situation of the residents. The present policy has been designed to provide users with financial flexibility, allowing them to forego paying user fees until such a time as they are financially able to do so, without incurring any undue burden or hardship.

The MLGU, though not directly involved in the O&M as well as sustainability aspects of the subproject, extends its support to the transformation efforts of the camp and allows the ex-combatants a leeway to pursue their activities for successful reintegration into the community. Moreover, the current writing does not provide access to the BDP of Reina Regente. The document would have been a valuable reference in comprehending the village's overall development direction and how it situates the camp in its inclusive growth agenda.

### ii) Direct beneficiaries

The water project continues to benefit 89 households<sup>24</sup>. Of the four (4) tap stands provided, three (3) are in the core area of the camp benefiting the ex-combatants, active combatants, and their families. The fourth tap stand, located at the outer core of the camp, serves the civilian households clustered in the next proximate enclave from the camp.

Further, the water project contributes to three transformation domains:

**Spiritual:** Most individuals residing in the camp are of the Muslim faith. The presence of a mosque situated within the core area of the camp serves as a testament to the integral influence of religion in their lives. The water system creates an atmosphere that is conducive to the strengthening of their spiritual foundations through practices like ablution, bathing, and washing. Islamic ethics articulates that clean water is a prerequisite for worship.<sup>25</sup>

**Social:** The Islamic faith dictates the permissible use of water for maintaining individual hygiene and good health. In the camp, the water system has played a vital role in improving the WASH practices

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<sup>24</sup> As reported by the RRPC chairperson during the IDI

<sup>25</sup> The Future of Water: Technology, Challenges, and Islamic Perspective. Jurnal Kajian Peradaban Islam. <https://www.jkpis.com/index.php/jkpis/article/download/70/44>.

and accelerating the village-wide ongoing efforts towards achieving a Zero Open Defecation (ZOD)<sup>26</sup> status. The residents have reported a significant decrease in the incidence of diarrheal diseases affecting the children in the camp. As the women primarily engage in care work, the availability of potable water has facilitated the easier performance of their daily tasks such as cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, childcare, elderly care, and promoting personal hygiene and sanitation. They expressed contentment and satisfaction with the quality of the water and its proximity to their homes.

**Peace and security:** As the decades-old conflict between the Government and the MILF was stoked by “ethnic and belief differences, grievances, and identity misinterpretation” (UNESCO 2021), the installation of a water system in the camp demonstrated a continuing commitment to ushering them into the larger society by fulfilling a primary need of its inhabitants, which in turn helped to alleviate their sense of exclusion and isolation.

## 4.2 Labour and productivity

### 4.2.1 Labour

Among the subproject's key priorities were directed at a) asset creation, which involved the construction of the water systems, and b) skills development, which aimed to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities for sustaining the facility as well as address unemployment and/or underemployment. For this section, the focus is narrowed down to the skills development component of the intervention and its contribution to the continuing upkeep of the water utility and increasing employability in a rural setting.

The World Bank (2023) declared “low skills perpetuate poverty and inequality. When done right, skills development can reduce un- and underemployment, increase productivity, and improve standards of living. Investing in upskilling or reskilling people for jobs of the future makes economic sense”.<sup>27</sup> Parallel with this, the ILO articulated that “employment is the primary means of income generation for the poor... improving their employability and [prepare them for] productive employment opportunities ... is an important way to fight poverty”.<sup>28</sup>

Related to the above, the following were derived.

## Findings

In Looy, the skills training sessions augmented the leadership skills of the KLWA officers. It proved to be particularly beneficial in the O&M of the water facility, ensuring that the policies and rules concerning the upkeep of the subproject were enforced in an organized and structured manner. It capacitated them in the systematic collection of fees, clustering of water users to avoid unnecessary queueing, and addressing water-related issues without delay. The training sessions have demonstrated their value and impact by empowering the KLWA officers to carry out their responsibilities more

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<sup>26</sup> Philippines. The Department of Health (DOH) has released Administrative Order 2010-0021, entitled "Sustainable Sanitation as a National Policy and a National Priority Program of the DOH". Its main objective is to achieve the Zero Open Defecation (ZOD) status of all villages in the country and ensure universal access to safe and adequate sanitary facilities by 2028. These goals are also part of the Philippine Health Agenda (2016-2022) and are aligned with the health targets of the FOURmula One (F1) Plus and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which aim to provide safely managed sanitation services by 2030.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/skillsdevelopment>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/dw4sd/themes/productivity/lang--en/index.htm#38>

effectively. As an illustration, the treasurer/secretary of the water association was able to apply the acquired skills in bookkeeping, work organizing, and planning not only in her organizational role but also in her position as an employed educator. Additionally, the president of the KLWA and the designated plumber expressed their newfound confidence in installing water pipe networks for Levels II and III water systems, from source to taps. As a result, they are now well-equipped to impart the same skill set to others.

In the MILF Camp, the RRPC chairperson narrated that individuals who had received training in masonry skills are currently employed in the construction of various vertical infrastructures including an office, warehouse, Masjid (mosque), and solar drier within the camp. Additionally, several training beneficiaries have secured employment as construction workers or masons in other towns.

In Romongaob, the masonry training has successfully placed two individuals as masons in a large-scale construction project. Furthermore, there have been notable instances of increased employability attributed to the OSH and plumbing training sessions (*i.e.*, *Stories of Change 3 & 4*).

While the current study is limited in its ability to provide a comprehensive and quantitative assessment of the effects of skills training on the employability of beneficiaries, it can be inferred that the intervention holds significant potential to enhance income generation within households through employment.

### Story of change 3: The safety officer

In 2019, as the guardian of his grandchild who was enrolled in the TCES, Mindalano Bornea qualified to run as PTA Vice-President and was duly elected. The TCES-PTA was later organized as the community-based contractor for the ILO Water Project. Mindalano was selected to undergo Safety Officer training by ILO and, upon completion, actively participated in the construction activities of the subproject as a Safety Officer, amid the COVID-19 pandemic movement restrictions.

Although the construction works were challenging, Mindalano found much satisfaction in contributing to the development of a water source closer to the students. He initially believed his role as a Safety Officer was a one-time engagement, but he received an unexpected call from the incumbent Mayor of South Upi who personally handpicked him to become the Safety Officer II of the 3-year construction of the Town Hall, which began in July 2022. At the age of 65, he is compensated with PhP500 per day (US\$9.10) and is grateful for the opportunity to be gainfully employed.

***“I cannot thank ILO enough for the opportunity to be trained as a Safety Officer. I would not be where I am today if not for that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity afforded me”.***

-Mindalano Bornea, 65 years old  
Safety Officer II



@ ILO / A. Origenes  
L-R: Mindalano Bornea (Safety Officer II) and  
Charlie Nabong Sr. (TCES Water Tender)

## Story of change 4: The water tender

Charlie Nabong Sr. was one of the beneficiaries of ILO's cash-for-work program, which provided him with training in plumbing works. Following the successful completion of the water project in the TCES, Charlie was designated as the water tender, responsible for the routine maintenance of the water system in the school. Charlie's compensation consists of a monthly honorarium, which is derived from the water user's fee collected through the TCES-PTA. This is in addition to his work as a freelance electrician.

***“The ILO water project was instrumental in capacitating me to qualify for this job. As a water tender, I am happy with my role in ensuring that the children and their families can drink safe water every day.”***

- Charlie Nabong Sr., 46 years old  
Water tender, TCES

### 4.2.2 Productivity

In the succeeding discussion, there is no attempt to provide an in-depth economic valuation of saved time for water collection resulting from the subproject beneficiaries' proximity to water access. What is accorded hereon is a descriptive illustration of the impacts of time saved from water collection on increasing productivity of the beneficiaries.

Water.org (2023) pointed out that the time spent collecting water is time that could otherwise be spent generating income.<sup>29</sup> Reaffirming this statement, UNICEF (2016) cited that the United Nation's SDG 6 for water and sanitation, calls for universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water by 2030. It further underscored that the first crucial step is to provide basic water services to every individual within a 30-minute round trip.

Related to the preceding notes, the following were derived.

## Findings

The proximity of households to water posts is inferred to have significant consequences on the time saved in the three villages. Despite the water system design still requiring water collection outside of the home, the beneficiaries have appreciated the proximity of the water posts from their residence. As a result, substantial time savings have been observed.

The proceeding table shows that currently, fetching water varies between 2 to 15 minutes for a single trip, including queueing. The total water collection time does not exceed 30 minutes for a round-trip, queueing included. With time saved ranging between 28 minutes to about 6 hours, individuals have gained 1 to 2 hours for productive activities, another 1 to 2 hours for care works, and 2 to 3 hours for leisure or other meaningful activities.

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<sup>29</sup> <https://water.org/our-impact/water-crisis/economic-crisis/>

**Table 8: Time saved from water fetching and time gained for productive activities, care works, and leisure**

|                                                                                                          | Before                | After                                                      | Time saved               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Fetching time</b> (depending on the distance from the house to the water point)                       | 30 minutes to 6 hours | 2 to 15 minutes<br>(round trip does not exceed 30 minutes) | 28 minutes to 5.75 hours |
|                                                                                                          | Before                | After                                                      | Time gained              |
| <b>Hours spent on productive activities</b> (wage employment, income-generation activities, up-skilling) | 4 to 5 hours          | 5 to 7 hours                                               | 1 to 2 hours             |
| <b>Hours spent on care works</b> (child rearing, domestic chores)                                        | 3 to 4 hours          | 4 to 6 hours                                               | 1 to 2 hours             |
| <b>Hours spent on leisure</b>                                                                            | 0 to 1 hour           | 2 to 4 hours                                               | 2 to 3 hours             |

The construction of the water systems resulted in a marked improvement in the beneficiaries' water access, thereby increasing convenience and efficiency. Consequently, a greater portion of their time is allocated to other important tasks, leading to an overall improvement across the following domains:

**Productivity:** With the significant reduction in the amount of time needed to fetch water, developing their skills, and pursuing more productive roles that can augment their family's income become permissible. The women respondents shared that they can now engage in ventures that are dependent on the availability of water, such as vegetable gardening, hog raising, and poultry production (both for household consumption and small-scale business). Furthermore, they have identified other opportunities to engage in income-generating activities such as establishing small food businesses (i.e. *eateries*) and selling ornamental plants. This is specific to the experience in the villages of Romongaob and Looy.

**Care works:** The water project has effectively addressed the practical gender needs of women and girls, across the three villages. The female respondents reported a significant reduction in efforts for domestic tasks requiring water. These include household chores, childcare, meal preparation, and maintaining cleanliness and sanitation in their homes. The convenient and safe access to potable water has provided them, being traditionally assigned reproductive roles, an enabling environment to carry out these daily tasks with ease. Furthermore, the proximity of water has opened opportunities for the improvement of WASH practices both at home and in school.

**Leisure:** Women are afforded extra time for recreational activities. For some women in Romongaob and Looy, gardening and cultivating ornamental plants can be a particularly enjoyable form of relaxation. The male counterparts shared that they can now go about their respective day jobs early and engage in more relaxing activities at the end of the day. Children on the other hand were afforded more time for playing and sleeping.

## 5.0 Summary of impacts and lessons

The discussion hereon touches upon the overall contribution of the subprojects to the four human rights-based domains for water access with a gender perspective, namely: Availability, Accessibility, Quality and acceptability, and Affordability. Also included are the water system's impact and contribution in relation to social inclusion, and sustainability, alongside the relevant lessons learned that are useful for future water and gender interventions in similar contexts.

### a) Availability

The subprojects provide adequate and safely managed basic water services to three schools, benefiting an average of 2,100 students each academic year and 427 households across three villages.

*Women- and men-related impact:* Women experience an improvement in their health (i.e., muscular pain relief) and overall well-being after being freed from the physical and mental burden of water collection. This allowed them to perform their daily tasks more quickly and efficiently as they remained primarily responsible for domestic chores, ensuring their respective households had sufficient water for drinking, cleaning, and caring for children and older people, including those with disabilities. Personal care and hygiene became more permissive with the availability of clean water, which helped boost their self-esteem and individual dignity.

The male members of the community were also relieved from the onerous responsibility of water collection, thereby enabling them to channel their attention and energy towards more productive endeavors such as pursuing employment and other income-generating activities to support their families.

*Child-related impact:* Children are afforded better learning spaces with improved sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools. Having clean drinking water means that they are less likely to be infected with water-borne diseases and less likely to suffer physical damage from carrying heavy water containers over long distances daily. This also means that they do not spend school time fetching water anymore, especially in the morning. Having a safe and readily available water further facilitates a healthy mindset among children who might otherwise resort to negative coping mechanisms due to the stress of long queues at water points or the struggle to obtain water in competition with others.

### b) Accessibility

UNICEF (2016) underscored that it is crucial to ensure that women and children do not have to spend an undue amount of time to exercise their fundamental right to 'clean sufficient, continuous, safe, physically accessible water' for personal and domestic use. As such, the subprojects brought safe drinking water closer to the homes and schools which contribute to achieving the SDG target 6.1 being monitored as "drinking water from an improved water source that is located on premises, available when needed, and free from contamination" (WHO 2023). Further on achieving 6.2 the water systems also contributed to "... ending open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations."

*Women- and men-related impact:* The strategic location of the tap stands (i.e., proximity to the households is within 1,000 meters) afforded considerable time savings, ranging from 28 minutes to about 6 hours daily. This, in turn, increased the time for household productivity in areas such as skills development, income-generation, as well as care work and leisure. Supporting this impact results in the three villages is the statement of the WHO that improving water access and sanitation can catalyze economic growth and poverty alleviation.

Additionally, the water systems were particularly crucial for sustaining the ZOD status of Romongaob and Looy villages. Similarly, in the MILF camp, access to water is an enabling requisite for them to achieve the same status.

**Child-related impact:** Water access in school settings facilitated the improvement of hygiene and sanitation practices, particularly through the provision of WASH facilities. Also, the installation of handwashing stations in the three schools aligned with the global handwashing campaign of UNICEF and WHO, which aims to safeguard children [and their surrounding communities] against diseases by ensuring that they have access to such facilities. UNICEF emphasizes that proper hand hygiene is a critical component of safe and effective healthcare.

### c) Affordability

For water to be affordable, the United Nations (UN) asserts that water costs should not exceed 3 per cent of household income.<sup>30</sup> Limited household data considered, the following table provides a rough illustration of the potential savings per household in the three villages resulting from having improved and accessible potable water sources.

**Table 9: Water expense, before and after the project**

| Table 9: Water expense, before and after the project                                             |                                 |                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                       |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BEFORE THE PROJECT                                                                               |                                 |                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                       |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Average cost of drinking water per 18.9-liter container                                          |                                 | *Estimated number of 18.9-liter containers purchased per week per household of 5 members | **Estimated expense per week                                                                                                                                          |      | What this means?<br><br>In a rural village, it is typical for households to rely on a single earner. For purposes of illustration, if the earner makes the minimum wage per day <sup>31</sup> (PhP306 or US\$5.56) and works five days every week, the household's water expense would cost approximately 13% of their weekly income. |
| PhP                                                                                              | US\$                            |                                                                                          | PhP                                                                                                                                                                   | US\$ |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 27.50                                                                                            | 0.50                            | 7                                                                                        | 192.50                                                                                                                                                                | 3.50 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| *Based on the standard volume of water intake per day per person (i.e., 3.7 liters)              |                                 |                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                       |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| **Estimates exclude transportation fee                                                           |                                 |                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                       |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| AFTER THE PROJECT                                                                                |                                 |                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                       |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Village                                                                                          | ***Water Fee per week/household |                                                                                          | What this means?<br><br>Based on the weekly earnings, it can be inferred that the expenditure on household water bill constitutes roughly 1.63% of the weekly income. |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                                                                  | PhP                             | US\$                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                       |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Romongaob                                                                                        | 0                               | 0                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                       |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Looy                                                                                             | 25.00                           | 0.45                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                       |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| MILF Camp                                                                                        | 0                               | 0                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                       |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| ***Estimates exclude water fees in schools as these are collected per student per academic year. |                                 |                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                       |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

Given that majority of the residents in the three villages are in lower-income households, the significant reduction on the weekly expense for drinking water purchases matter. The amount saved is allocated towards fulfilling other critical household expenses, such as food or medicine thereby optimizing the household budget.

**Women- and men-related impact:** The subprojects have effectively addressed the issue on water scarcity/cleanliness of mothers with infants and young children, freeing them from the financial burden and concern of obtaining clean water from private vendors. This has allowed them to allocate their attention and resources towards other essential household responsibilities.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/water>

<sup>31</sup> Philippines. National Wages and Productivity Commission. March 2023.

*Community-related impact:* The water systems were designed to be easily managed and maintained, enabling communities through the village-based water associations to develop and demonstrate their leadership and management skills in water governance to secure the long-term and effective running of the water facilities. Women were included in the decision-making process such that their priorities were considered. They had the opportunity to also decide on service standards and fees for water usage that do not unduly burden the water users -permitting the poorest and most vulnerable members of the villages to have equal access to the facilities. It can be said that the prospects for the water systems to evolve into a bigger revenue-generating distribution utilities are not far-fetched if the current momentum is maintained. This is particularly demonstrated in the experience of Looy and Romongaob which contributes to meeting another requisite for achieving SDG 6 on ensuring a sustainable management of a safe and affordable drinking water.<sup>32</sup>

#### **d) Quality and acceptability**

The integration of a chlorinator into the design of the drinking water systems effectively eliminates harmful organisms and impurities that could lead to potential health hazards. This mechanism continues to ensure that the quality standards of the utilities are met including water appearance, taste, and odor. The women who are more likely to report water quality concerns find satisfaction on the water from the water systems. Since the subprojects were handed over to the respective LGUs, there have been no significant cases of water-borne illnesses reported among the water users.

#### **e) Inclusion**

Access to affordable and quality water is open to all community members, without discrimination to women and girls, PWDs, IPs, and other vulnerable social groups. This aligns with SDG 10.2, "...empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status." Women are also given the opportunity to further their leadership skills through direct participation in the management of the water system. With women comprising most tap leaders, their contribution and effectiveness as community managers is well recognized. This impact aligns well to SDG 5.5, "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life."

#### **f) Sustainability**

Sustainability of the water system is further ensured in establishing the community-based water associations and building their capacities in maintenance through close monitoring and regular upkeep of the water system by trained water tenders, compensated for their services through the user's fee judiciously collected and managed by the respective CBOs (KLWA and TCES-PTA). The oversight function and participation of the barangay and municipal LGUs in water system management are added mechanisms that help sustain and expand the benefits of the water system project to other hard-to-reach households, enclaves, and communities within and outside of the village. This impact aligns with SDG Goal 6, specifically 6.4, "substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity."

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/sdg-target-6-ensure-availability-and-sustainable-management-of-water-and-sanitation-for-all>

Based on the preceding impacts, subscription to the following priority topics under the SDGs are merited: **Goal 1** End poverty in all its forms everywhere; **Goal 3** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; **Goal 5** Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls; **Goal 6** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; and **Goal 10** Reduced inequalities.

## **Lessons**

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Related to the overall water and gender experience of the three villages, the following lessons were derived:

### **On bridging gender data gaps**

Comprehensive sex-disaggregated data is crucial in reporting progress in water and gender from the project level to the national level and eventually to the global level. However, the absence of such data poses a significant obstacle. Additionally, there are methodological limitations in data generated for impact studies like the one mentioned here, which affect its suitability for global monitoring and reporting. Therefore, it is essential to have standardized data sets that enable cross-country comparison and quick assessment of contributions to achieving the SDGs 2030 on WASH and gender.

Harmonized databases on gender and water can help in quickly assessing the comparative situation of women, men, children, and other vulnerable groups across global settings. Such databases can then inform policies and laws to reduce country-specific gaps in WASH aids and public investment priorities for remote waterless areas.

### **On gender and inclusion**

While the project design incorporates the mainstreaming of gender in water access and management, measuring women's participation solely in quantitative terms is insufficient. UN Water underpins women inclusion as key to improving the efficacy of water projects by six to seven times compared to those without it. It is then imperative to prioritize their involvement in all aspects of the project, and in particular, the sustainability processes of the water facility. When women's concerns, needs, and aspirations are given due consideration, it fosters empowerment and transformation, not just within their own families, but also throughout their respective communities. Facilitating women and other marginalized groups with a platform to articulate their viewpoints and develop as leaders engenders inclusion, which is pivotal to contributing to the achievement of SDG 5.

### **On future-focused water operations and maintenance**

Transforming water associations into professional organizations, with the appropriate support from local government units, is a crucial step in ensuring the sustainability and availability of water utilities. These organizations must possess the ability to innovate and position themselves as community-based commercial water service providers, while still maintaining efficient, reliable, responsive, and inclusive water systems. This transformation is essential for the development of more resilient water supply and services that can benefit a wider range of waterless communities in the long run.

## 6.0 Ways forward

This study ends with a note of optimism. Taking off from the results of the three case studies that highlight the experiences, impacts and lessons in community water system implementation and management, the study offers the following key actions for consideration:

**Key Action 1:** Bridge the water and gender data gap by dedicating resources for collection of high-quality, timely, and reliable data to permit participation and contribution to the global assessment, monitoring, and reporting of progress specifically on SDGs 5 and 6. Tools to also account and assess the commitment to ‘leave no one behind’ should also be adopted.

**Key Action 2:** Conduct a parallel study to develop and/or enhance ILO’s implementation framework that highlights the connections between water, gender, social inclusion, and peace, leading to the development of a comprehensive ‘theory of change’ that would guide the implementation and monitoring of water system projects in conflict-prone settings.

**Key Action 3:** Conduct a follow-up impact study with a wider project scope to capture the higher-level transformation occurring at the community level after two (2) to three (3) years arising from the provision of water utilities. This will conclusively determine the contributions made towards achieving SDGs 1, 3, 5, 6, and 10.

**Key Action 4:** Improve programme and project strategy by integrating relevant universally defined and endorsed impact indicators at the outset of the project implementation to suffice efficient tracking of progress and contribution to the achievement of SDGs on water and gender by 2030.

# Annexes

## A. Survey Instrument for IDIs and SGIs

### 1. Access to clean and reliable water

#### A. WATER ACCESS (before/after)

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>What was the women's situation prior to project implementation?</b>                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>1. Where do you collect water? What sources are used for collecting water? How far from your house?</b><br>Before the project:<br>After the project:                                                                              |
| <b>2. Why do you collect water from this source? Do you have to pay? Other sources of water? Please explain.</b><br>Before the project:<br>After the project:                                                                        |
| <b>3. Does everyone have access to the water source 24/7? Y/N</b><br>If no, please explain. (How many hhs?)<br>Before the project:<br>After the project:                                                                             |
| <b>Were there efforts to organize the water consumers? Please describe the process.</b>                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Was there a need to register the water consumers?</b><br><br><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No                                                                                                             |
| <b>For less F/M water consumers, what efforts are being made to increase the number of consumers? Who leads the efforts (BLGU? Local water association institution)?</b>                                                             |
| <b>Who collects the water:</b><br><br><input type="checkbox"/> Women <input type="checkbox"/> Men <input type="checkbox"/> Children <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify:                                                 |
| <b>Are there households still purchasing water regularly from water vendors?</b><br>If yes, how many HHs? _____<br>How much do they pay per day's consumption (average)? _____<br><br><b>Please explain why they purchase water:</b> |
| <b>Are there conflicts because of water access? Please explain.</b><br>Before the project:<br>After the project:                                                                                                                     |

**B. Issues/Problems faced in relation to water:**

| Key areas  | Before the project | After the project |
|------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Health     |                    |                   |
| Education  |                    |                   |
| Livelihood |                    |                   |

**C. Inclusivity**

**What behavioural changes along the way have allowed more women to participate, especially in decision making? What gender biases have women encountered that prevented their limited participation in community matters?**

**For women: Do you engage in social interaction with other F/M members in you community when you go fetch water?**

Before the project, please explain:

After the project, please explain:

**For women:** Are your opinions and views in water use taken in household decisions? In community decisions particularly in water access and management? Please explain.

**For men:** Do you consider the opinions/views of women in water use in your household? In community decisions particularly in water access and management? Please explain.

**For women: Do you feel safe in fetching water from the water system? On a scale of 1 – 5 (with 1 for least safe and 5 for most safe), cross the corresponding number:**

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Do you feel that your children are safe in fetching water from the water system?

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**For men: Do you feel safe for women (your wife or daughters) fetching water from the water system? On a scale of 1 – 5 (with 1 for least safe and 5 for most safe), cross the corresponding number:**

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**To what extent have women community leaders pushed the margins in asserting their rights and access to water? Acceptance of women's involvement by men and the community as a whole? Do they get water rights as women?**

**Are men and the rest of the community generally more appreciative of women as co-workers and co-managers after project implementation than before the project started?**

☐ Y   ☐ N

Please explain:

**Are there women leaders in the community? If yes, what are their roles in the water system access and management?**

Before the project:

After the project:

Are there specific rules for water access of women? Please explain.

#### D. Sustainability Mechanism/Operation and Maintenance

##### NOTE: THIS PORTION IS FOR THE WATER SYSTEM ASSOCIATION/INSTITUTION

Identify systematic approaches involving men and women that contribute to the successes of multiple water programmes, improving social, cultural environmental and economic benefits to both women and the community. What are the factors that contribute to long term sustainability of local water programmes for multiple uses, with special emphasis on local approaches and involvement of men and women.

What mechanisms worked to make the water system management inclusive? What motivated women to participate and overcome bias?

What is the water O & M structure? Is there an association/committee? (cite whether formal or informal)  
How is the water system association/institution organized?

What are the roles of women? Do they participate in decision-making?  
If no, why? If yes, in what ways

Do you have an O & M Manual? O&M policies/rules?

☐Y ☐N

What it is about? Please explain:

a) How many F/M members are there?

b) Do you charge fees for using/consuming water? ☐Y ☐N  
If yes, how much?

c) Who collects the fees? Frequency (monthly? Weekly?)

d) How are the finances managed? Do women have participation in this? Please explain

e) Do you conduct meetings? ☐Y ☐N  
How often?

Who attends the meetings? Agenda of the meetings?

How often are suggestions by male participants accepted?

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being never accepted and 5 being always accepted (cross the corresponding number):

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

How often are suggestions by female participants accepted?

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being never accepted and 5 being always accepted (cross the corresponding number):

|                                                                                                                                                                  |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
|                                                                                                                                                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f) Has your association/institution/or the community improved the water project? How? (e.g. repairs, protection of the water facility, policy formulation, etc.) |   |   |   |   |   |
| g) Do you get technical/financial support? Who provides the support? Is it adequate? Y/N<br>Please explain.                                                      |   |   |   |   |   |
| h) What initiatives have been taken by the community that would suggest a strong sense of project ownership?                                                     |   |   |   |   |   |

**For barangay officials: Do you have a gender-responsive water policy?**

a) ☐Y ☐N

If yes, what is the implementation status of the policy?

☐ Planning phase ☐ Early implementation ☐ Full implementation. Please explain:

Please explain briefly what the policy is about.

## 2. Labour

What was the labour profile of the community before project implementation?

(This is for those who underwent skills training at the start of the project)  
**Did the skills acquired from the project increase your employability? If no, why?**

**If yes**, please explain how has employability of men and women improved as a result of the skills training provided by the project?

What type of jobs did you take up? (Women, Youth, PWD, IPs, etc.)

Other ways where you used your skills obtained. Please describe. (Example: repairs in their houses, barangay infra projects, etc.)

## 3. Productivity

Did the provision of water facilities lead to an increase in agricultural output or creation of income-generating activities? Please explain.

If you were not required to spend time on fetching water, what do you do with the time?

What improvements are visible as a result of the water system project?

**For the schools:**

1. How many students are currently enrolled: F \_\_\_\_\_; M \_\_\_\_\_
2. Increase in enrollment after the water project? ☐ YES ☐ NO
3. What affects the increase/decrease in enrollment?
4. Does the school have separate sanitation and hygiene facilities for boys and girls?  
☐ YES ☐ NO  
If no, state the reason:
5. Is there a handwashing facility:  
☐ YES ☐ NO  
a) If no, state the reason:

**\*\***

What are the main concerns regarding WATSAN in the school? List main concerns by importance.

## B. List of respondents

|    | Name                | Sex | Age | Occupation                    | Barangay      | Tribe           |
|----|---------------------|-----|-----|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1  | Nhonalyn V. Baylon  | F   | 43  | Teacher                       | Looy          | Ilongga-Teduray |
| 2  | Gina B. Tenorio     | F   | 45  | Housekeeper                   | Looy          | Teduray         |
| 3  | Julieta R. Leon     | F   | 59  | Housekeeper                   | Looy          | Teduray         |
| 4  | Shiela G. Aron      | F   | 45  | Teacher                       | Looy          | Teduray-Ilongga |
| 5  | Julieta M. Carumba  | F   | 53  | KLWA BOD                      | Looy          | Teduray         |
| 6  | Nerissa M. Alimao   | F   | 46  | KLWA Treasurer                | Looy          | Ilongga         |
| 7  | Danilo Rosarial     | M   | 52  | KLWA President                | Looy          | Ilonggo         |
| 8  | Rene Masaro         | M   | 37  | KLWA Plumber                  | Looy          | Teduray         |
| 9  | Pedrito Basilio     | M   | 51  | KLWA officer                  | Looy          | Teduray         |
| 10 | Michelle Joy Linobo | F   | -   | MLGU -South Upi               | Romongaob     | Ilongga         |
| 11 | Elizabeth Romina    | F   | 47  | PTA secretary                 | Romongaob     | -               |
| 12 | Rubirosa E. Baron   | F   | 56  | Teacher                       | Romongaob     | Ilocano         |
| 13 | Nenita P. Gunsí     | F   | 56  | Teacher                       | Romongaob     | Ilongga         |
| 14 | Eliza Ruiz          | F   | 39  | Baby sitter                   | Romongaob     | Teduray-Cebuana |
| 15 | Charlyn Ampoc       | F   | 31  | Business owner                | Romongaob     | Teduray         |
| 16 | Helen Padua         | F   | 48  | BLGU Councilor                | Romongaob     | -               |
| 17 | Andrew Tumbaga      | M   | 60  | BLGU Councilor                | Romongaob     | -               |
| 18 | Marcel G. Bagis     | M   | 56  | Teacher                       | Romongaob     | Teduray         |
| 19 | Mindalano Bornea    | M   | 64  | Safety Officer                | Romongaob     | Cebuano         |
| 20 | Charlie Nabong Sr.  | M   | 41  | Water Tender                  | Romongaob     | Teduray         |
| 21 | Adan Uy Ampong      | M   | n/a | RRPC President                | Reina Regente | Maguindanaon    |
| 22 | Noel Pahm           | M   | 42  | Farmer                        | Reina Regente | Maguindanaon    |
| 23 | Saiden Akmad        | M   | -   | Former project water engineer | Cotabato City | Maguindanaon    |
| 24 | Jennylyn Aguinaldo  | F   | -   | Former Project Manager        | Cotabato City | -               |

**Total: 24 (F-14; M-10)**

## C. List of reference materials

|    |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | 2nd BDP 2023-2028                                                                                                                                                       |
| 2  | Annex on Normalization, signed on 25th Jan 2014 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia                                                                                               |
| 3  | Barangay Development Plan of Romongaob                                                                                                                                  |
| 4  | Basic Pre-Feasibility Information Sheet Subprojects (Looy)                                                                                                              |
| 5  | Basic Pre-Feasibility Information Sheet Subprojects (Reina Regente)                                                                                                     |
| 6  | Basic Pre-Feasibility Information Sheet Subprojects (Romongaob)                                                                                                         |
| 7  | Camps Transformation Plan, 2021-2023 BARMM                                                                                                                              |
| 8  | Concept Note, Improvement of Water Supply Equipment Management Capacity for the Establishment of Peace in Mindanao, October 2018                                        |
| 9  | Executive Order No. 79: Implementing the Annex on Normalization under the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, signed on 24th April 2019 by Pres. Rodrigo Duterte |
| 10 | Final Report, Improvement of Water Supply Equipment Management Capacity for the Establishment of Peace in Mindanao, October 2019                                        |
| 11 | Gender-responsive Indicators for Water Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting, Tools 1-4, UNESCO-WWAP                                                                     |
| 12 | Harmonized GAD Guidelines for project development, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation, Third Edition. NEDA, PCW, ODA GAD Network. May 2016                       |
| 13 | ILO Independent Final Evaluation, March 2022                                                                                                                            |
| 14 | Ke'minanam Luwey Waleg Association 5-year Development Plan                                                                                                              |
| 15 | O&M Plan of the Level II Water System in Timanan Central Elementary School                                                                                              |
| 16 | Terminal Report, Improvement of Water Supply Equipment Management Capacity for the Establishment of Peace in Mindanao, March 2022                                       |