

Lesson Learned from the grass-root activities to assist water and sanitation access at community levels in the Asia-Pacific

Summary:

Japan Water Forum (JWF) carries out water supply and sanitation assistance at the grass-roots level by working collaboratively with the local NGOs and the local implementing partners not only in the developing countries of the Asia-Pacific but also in Africa. The JWF's grass-root activities are formed and operated by utilizing membership fees of the JWF and donations from each private company. We have mainly operated four financial programs, such as JWF fund, 4°C Aqua Program, TORAY's Torayvino Fund, and Darvish Yu Water Fund to implement water projects such as construction of wells, installation and repairing of hand water pumps, installation of rainwater tank to provide safe drinking water, and development of toilets in the school with the relevant educational and training programs for the community of the project areas.

The common good practices in the JWF's programs are drawn from the initiatives and capabilities of the local implementing partners. For instance, they coordinate the recipients' participation during the processes of planning, construction set-up of the facilities in order to encourage the recipients to take ownership of conducting maintenance and management. Local implementing agencies who deliver good practices also actively communicate with the national government and international community in order to inform them of the existing situations and to encourage them to understand the gap and challenges in each different area and develop targeted measures in line with the situation.

A common challenge from the JWF's programs is how to develop the criteria to measure the impact of the program. For example, one of the Aqua Programs conducted in Sri Lanka from 2012 aims to assist women and children who live in the non-water service area to reduce the burden from collecting water from the remote area by setting up the rainwater tank in their community. It is, however, difficult to measure the effects of implementing the projects, especially under the difficult situations to gather the quantitative data and monitor the effect of the projects regularly.

Since international community requests us to improve the situation of water and sanitation, especially in developing countries, in terms of not only their access but also the sustainability and adequacy of operation and maintenance under the sustainable development goals (SDGs), one of the challenges is how to disseminate the ideas and co-benefits for the implementation on the ground, and how to get the human resources, funding, and technologies to contribute to improve the livelihood of the projects' areas and achieve the targets of SDGs. It is necessary to organize the good practices and lessons systematically from the improvement of water and sanitation programs in the Asia-Pacific regions in line with the local situations and to improve the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle of the projects' implementation.