

## CAPACITY BUILDING OF COMMUNITY ORGANISERS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA TO PROMOTE REPLICATION OF MICRO-HYDRO PROJECTS

EXCHANGE ACTIVITY'S AIM: TO EMPOWER EXISTING AND POTENTIAL MICRO-HYDRO COMMUNITY ORGANISERS BY BUILDING THEIR VISUAL MEDIA SKILLS

**Location:**

Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines

**Technology:**

Micro-Hydro

**Scope:**

Capacity-building and knowledge sharing

**Costs:**

Total: € 20,000  
WISIONS financial support: € 20,000

**Host Organisation:**

Green Empowerment

<http://greenempowerment.org>

**Partners Involved:**

IBEKA (Indonesia), Tonibung (Malaysia), REAM (Myanmar), SIBAT (Philippines), Yamog (Philippines), Hydro Empowerment Network ([www.hpnet.org](http://www.hpnet.org))

**Duration:**

September 2015 – January 2018



Picture: WISIONS

### EXCHANGE NEED & OBJECTIVE(S)

This project emerged from the experience of Southeast Asian members of the Hydro Empowerment Network (HPNET), who identified a need to strengthen human resources at local level. Community organisers (COs), as they are called among the participating organisations, are at the heart of micro-hydro projects. COs may be practitioners in the micro-hydro arena or simply members of the communities that ultimately ensure the success of the systems. COs engage with their communities over the development cycle of a micro-hydro project, conveying the messages and principles of the project in a manner to which community members can relate.

Often, during the early stages of community engagement in micro-hydro projects, films related to micro-hydro are

screened for community members to give them a general idea of what they can expect during and after the installation of the system. The important role that visual tools play in this process motivated the approach used in this exchange.

The objectives of this exchange were to:

- Build the capacity of both experienced and up-and-coming micro-hydro COs in the four participating Southeast Asian countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines);
- Co-create, in collaboration with COs, effective media for use in community engagement and advocacy;
- Advocate for a more conducive environment for the replication of successful micro-hydro systems in Southeast Asia.

### PARTICIPANTS & TARGET GROUP(S)

The exchange was coordinated by Green Empowerment and involved five partner organisations in four countries, as well as the Hydro Empowerment Network (HPNET).

### ACTIVITIES

The project was implemented over six months and consisted of five local training events targeting COs. The sessions covered documentation and media management skills, with the aim of enabling the COs to create content and share the results online.

All the participating organisations were given free reign as to their specific approach to capacity building. They decided what media form to focus on in the training events, where in their country they would conduct the training and who would be involved. They all submitted a concept paper early in the process detailing the



approach and their rationale, how they would select the participants and what the final output would be (a documentary, photo book, short film etc.). They also described the choice of location and why it was relevant in the context of micro-hydro development. Following approval of all the concepts, the exchange moved forward.

Each local training event first built basic skills in video and/or photo documentation, story boarding, interviewing, use of smartphones, simple editing software, storytelling principles, audio-video techniques etc. The facilitators then guided the COs in the use of these skills to tell the story of their communities' micro-hydro projects to different audiences (e.g. to the communities themselves or to other local or regional audiences). In this way, the COs could share their own experiences and the challenges they encountered in sustaining renewable energy projects along the project cycle from conceptualisation and implementation to operation and maintenance.

Furthermore, advocacy groups and external experts were engaged to assist in the development of an advocacy and awareness-raising strategy.

## RESULTS & IMPACT

The exchange trained around 60 individuals involved in community-scale micro-hydro projects and engaged them collectively in the advocacy process. The link between community mobilisation and visual media was particularly successful, with all participants reporting that they found the approach helpful in mobilising their communities.

The exchange resulted in a series of media products (videos, photos and a coffee table book) that describe the micro-hydro development process from the perspective of communities and COs, detailing the media development process and community organisation approaches.

The innovative aspect of this project was that it identified and tested methods of

providing guidance and training to new COs and used the findings and media developed to advocate for community-centred approaches to micro-hydro power.

The exchange activity provided valuable insights into the wide variety of unique community organisation styles. HPNET facilitators were able to attend almost every training event and discuss community mobilisation approaches with all the organisations involved.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Community engagement is increasingly acknowledged as a key success factor for rural electrification and energy access initiatives. The organisations that participated in this exchange share a philosophy whereby the community engagement process lies at the centre of their work. They were, therefore, able to put forward recommendations in this realm for replication in other contexts.

Workshop participants and the organisations appreciated the focus on different media forms as these can be exploited to reach low-income segments via cell phones and television. The promotion of these skills among existing and future COs is a promising area for further work.

Source: Final Report submitted to WISIONS by Green Empowerment in January 2018

Picture: WISIONS