

## **Barangay Villahermosa, the Philippines**

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Barangay Villahermosa is a rural community near Cebu Island on Camotes Island. The center of the barangay (community) has a plaza, a health center, a chapel, a town hall, and school. The 278 households (1368 people) of Barangay Villahermosa are widely dispersed throughout the community. While some of the houses are clustered around the school and the basketball court, much of the community is widely dispersed throughout the barangay. "Habal habal" or motorbikes-for-hire are the only means of commuting within the barangay and around the island. The people of Barangay Villahermosa are mostly farmers and fishermen, however, some also work in construction or in small businesses.

The community members of Barangay Villahermosa are paying some of the capital costs and 100% of the maintenance costs for a new water system. With financial support from WaterPartners International, our Philippine partner organization is working the people of Barangay Villahermosa to develop and implement a sustainable community water supply and sanitation system.

### **Old water source**

A number of years ago, the Filipino government started a water project in Barangay Villahermosa. However, funding ran dry, and community members were left sharing as few as one tap between as many as 50 households. The demand was too high for the tapstands, and eventually, many of the water sources also ran dry. The limited water supply often led to fighting among community members. When water supplies are scarce, residents must walk about 1 km to the nearest water source, an unprotected spring. In the dry season, the women and children must walk farther.

### **New water source**

The community of Barangay Villahermosa, along with our PO is implementing a spring capping project. This project will move water from the spring to the village through a series of pipes, without ever exposing the water to surface contamination. Water will be collected in a storage tank in the village.

Communal tapstands will be constructed and will serve a cluster of between 6 and 10 households each. These clusters will be managed by an association, which will collect money for operations and management. The amount collected will be based on the expenses needed to maintain the source. Community members will be charged based on the amount of water used, on a cash and carry basis.

Additionally, there is an existing pipeline, which is very small and not serving the whole Barangay. This pipeline will be refurbished and will be used in this project as well. The existing taps will also be refurbished to serve better.

### **Activities completed**

The project in Barangay Villahermosa is about 85% complete. The water tank has been fully constructed, as has the chlorination box.

## **Project Complete in 2006**



This photo shows a new water storage tank being constructed in Barangay-Villahermosa.



Community members work together to construct a community tapstand. The tapstand will be shared among several families and each family will purchase water from a tap attendant. Barangay Villahermosa.



Community members have spent many hours digging trenches to lead water from the spring to the community tapstands. The job is difficult, but they are excited to have water closer to home. Barangay Villahermosa.



Community members participate in one of many hygiene education programs in Barangay Villahermosa.

Additionally, community members are 75% done completing the strenuous job of laying and burying the distribution pipeline. All 24 tapstands and meter boxes have been completed, and 16 of the 18 valve boxes have been completed. The community has also completed rehabilitation of two existing water tanks, which are now operational.

A water committee has been chosen in the village, and from the water committee members have been chosen to monitor the community tapstands.

Each tapstand will have a monitor who is responsible for collecting fees for water usage as well as maintaining the tapstand itself. These people are currently being trained in repair operations, so that should the tap or the water source break, it can be fixed relatively easily and it will not be abandoned.

Several training sessions have been conducted with the community members. One member from each household attended the training sessions. Some of the training sessions have focused on team building skills, which have helped during the construction process. Other trainings have focused on handwashing and other hygiene techniques, and proper sanitation usage. On day, staff members from our PO took the community members on an educational tour of the village to learn about the places in the community that were at risk for spreading disease and ways to prevent it.

### **Ongoing projects**

The community is working on constructing household pit latrines. The community health organizers decided to hold a contest to encourage community members to participate. As part of this contest, tapstand clusters will compete to have the cleanest environment, including drainage, compost, toilet, etc. Before the completion of the project is complete, there will be an evaluation to determine the communities with acceptable facilities.

Construction of the water system will also continue. Our partner is currently working with the community to complete the spring catchment system, and hope to complete it within the next six months.

### **Problems Encountered**

Governmental unrest can sometimes be a hindrance during development work. It is often frustrating and difficult to understand. The tiny village of Barangay Villahermosa has had this experience. Elections were held in the municipality during the project. Before the elections, the mayor of the municipality had been very supportive of the project. However, as a result of the election, that mayor was replaced with another mayor. Although the new mayor is also supportive of the project, during the time of the election and the turning over of power, many processes slowed down. This slowdown caused many materials to be delayed reaching the barangay. Now that that the new mayor is in place, the systems seem to be returning to normal and community members seem to be less worried about the power shift.



Attentive participants during the project orientation meeting and community organizing of the local water committee. Participants are residents of Purok Catleya and Mahayahay, beneficiaries of the Villahermosa Piped-Water Supply System.



Young boy from Lopez family wearing an oversized hat. Barangay Opao.