

AIDFI

From Water Access to Water Resilience

General Organizational Profile



Alternative Indigenous Development Foundation, Inc.

(AIDFI)

Organizational Profile

From Water Access to Water Resilience

Technologies in Harmony with Nature and People

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1. Organizational Overview

Alternative Indigenous Development Foundation, Inc. (AIDFI) is a Philippine-based non-profit and community innovation organization that works with underserved rural communities, small water utilities, local governments, and development partners. AIDFI develops practical and sustainable solutions for water access, water efficiency, rural livelihoods, and long-term community resilience.

AIDFI is best known for its hydraulic ram pump technology, which can deliver water to upland communities without electricity or fuel. However, the organization's work extends beyond technology. AIDFI combines appropriate technical solutions with social preparation, water association formation and strengthening, local technician training, WASH education, water safety, data-driven monitoring, community enterprise support, and long-term accompaniment.

The organization's current work is anchored on three major program pillars: the Holistic Water Program, the Holistic NRW Management Program, and the Social Sustainability Program. Together, these programs express AIDFI's central development message: from water access to water resilience.

Profile Area	Description
Organization	Alternative Indigenous Development Foundation, Inc. (AIDFI)
Location	Philippines, with roots in Negros Occidental and work with rural communities and partners in the Philippines and beyond
Core Identity	Non-profit, community-rooted innovation and development organization
Main Theme	From Water Access to Water Resilience
Core Approach	Appropriate technology, community ownership, data-driven monitoring, and long-term support
Program Pillars	Holistic Water Program; Holistic NRW Management Program; Social Sustainability Program
Key Technologies and Methods	Hydraulic ram pumps, gravity-fed systems, mechanical water kiosks, mWater-based monitoring, NRW field methods, essential oil livelihood technologies
Core Positioning AIDFI transforms water access into long-term resilience by combining appropriate technology, empowered communities, field-based innovation, reliable data, and sustained support.	

Impact at a Glance

Key statistics illustrating AIDFI's impact on water access and community resilience.

Year Founded	1992
Water Systems Installed	600+
People Reached	300,000+
Litres Pumped without Fuel or Electricity	60+ billion litres
Utilities Engaged (NRW)	5
Household Surveys (NRW)	17,977
Ram Pump Technology Transfer	Afghanistan, Nepal, Colombia & Mexico

2. Background and Identity

AIDFI emerged from the social and economic realities of rural Negros, where many farmers and workers faced displacement, poverty, and limited access to basic services. Its work has long been shaped by the needs of far-flung communities, especially those excluded from conventional infrastructure and development systems.

AIDFI's early identity was rooted in agricultural production, appropriate technology, and community development. Over time, the organization became widely recognized for redesigning and applying the

hydraulic ram pump as a practical solution for upland communities that lack easy access to water, electricity, fuel, and technical services.

The organization's identity has since expanded into a broader community development model. AIDFI does not only introduce machinery or build infrastructure. It develops social systems around technology so that communities can own, manage, maintain, finance, protect, and sustain the intervention over time.

This identity is captured in AIDFI's guiding phrase: Technologies in Harmony with Nature and People. The phrase reflects the organization's commitment to practical, environmentally responsible technologies that respond to real community needs and can be understood, repaired, and sustained locally.

3. Development Philosophy and Approach

AIDFI believes that development should not create dependency. Communities should become active owners and managers of their own resources and institutions. For this reason, AIDFI's projects are designed around local ownership, community participation, practical training, and long-term accompaniment.

AIDFI's approach integrates four core elements:

- **Appropriate technology** that is practical, affordable, repairable, environmentally responsible, and suited to remote rural conditions.
- **Community ownership** through water association formation and strengthening, local governance, tariff planning, community labor, and trained local technicians.
- **Data and monitoring** through household surveys, mWater-based tools, water system documentation, utility data, and long-term follow-up.
- **Long-term accompaniment** through sustainability monitoring, governance review, water safety support, technical follow-up, and continued relationship-building.

The result is a model that goes beyond project delivery. AIDFI seeks to build community institutions, strengthen local capacity, improve household well-being, reduce water losses, support livelihoods, and promote resilience.

4. Flagship Programs

AIDFI's current profile is organized around three program pillars. Each pillar has its own focus, but together they show AIDFI's integrated understanding of water, technology, social organization, and long-term sustainability.

4.1 Holistic Water Program



The Holistic Water Program is AIDFI's flagship community water access program. It supports waterless and water-poor rural communities through community-managed water systems using hydraulic ram pumps, gravity-fed systems where appropriate, reservoirs, pipelines, kiosks, and related water access infrastructure.

The program prioritizes upland, far-flung, and underserved communities where conventional systems may be difficult, costly, or unsustainable. It is called holistic because it combines technical implementation with social preparation, local ownership, training, WASH education, source protection, water safety, data gathering, and long-term sustainability support.

Updated Five-Phase Model

Phase 1 - Site Identification, Conference, Survey, and Design: AIDFI works with local governments, development partners, community leaders, and other stakeholders to identify potential project sites. Shortlisted sites are technically and socially assessed, and feasibility checks, surveys, and system designs are completed.

Phase 2 - Social Preparation and Pre-Implementation: AIDFI conducts community organizing, baseline household surveys, WASH education, water safety orientation, watershed and source protection discussions, tariff planning, legal preparation, and operation and maintenance planning. Water association formation and strengthening is central to this phase.

Phase 3 - Field Implementation: AIDFI, through its technical partner AIDFI Manufacturing, Innovations, and Technical Services, implements the water system. This may include source development, intake construction, ram pump or gravity-fed installation, pipelines, reservoirs, kiosks, testing, and commissioning.

Phase 4 - Stabilization, Training, and Handover: After installation, the system is stabilized and monitored. Local technicians receive further training, the water association is guided on system operation and management, and the project is formally turned over to the community.

Phase 5 - Sustainability Monitoring and Support: AIDFI continues to accompany the community after turnover through technical checks, governance review, financial review, WASH reinforcement, water safety follow-up, mWater updates, source protection follow-up, and support visits when needed.

4.2 Holistic NRW Management Program



The Holistic NRW Management Program is AIDFI's water efficiency and small utility support program. It helps small water utilities reduce non-revenue water, improve system knowledge, strengthen consumer engagement, and develop practical NRW reduction plans that can be replicated.

The program responds to a common challenge among utilities: water may be produced but lost before it reaches paying consumers because of leaks, inaccurate meters, unverified connections, unauthorized use, weak records, and limited NRW management systems. Reducing these losses supports financial sustainability, climate resilience, and improved service delivery.

Pilot-and-Replication Model

Phase 1 - Preparation and DMA Establishment: AIDFI works with the water utility to identify a pilot area, review existing system data, assess records, define the District Metered Area boundary, and prepare the utility team for NRW activities.

Phase 2 - Baseline Assessment: AIDFI conducts water balance review, consumer mapping, household and connection verification, pipeline validation, meter condition checks, pressure observations, and mWater-based data gathering.

Stakeholder Engagement - Consumer Meetings: Before major field activities begin, AIDFI and the utility conduct consumer meetings in the pilot DMA to explain the program, build trust, reduce resistance, and encourage cooperation.

Phase 3 - Field Implementation: The utility, with AIDFI support, implements physical and operational interventions such as meter replacement, meter relocation to accessible stub-outs, connection validation, leak detection using correlators, repair of identified leaks, and updating of mWater records.

Phase 4 - Stabilization and Monitoring: AIDFI and the utility monitor the pilot DMA through meter readings, flow data, pressure observations, repair records, consumer feedback, and mWater data.

Phase 5 - Evaluation and Replication Planning: The pilot DMA is evaluated as a test site, and lessons are used to develop a practical replication plan for other DMAs or service areas.

4.3 Social Sustainability Program



The Social Sustainability Program is AIDFI's long-term community development and livelihood partnership program. It reflects AIDFI's belief that marginalized and far-flung communities can build sustainable livelihoods when they are supported through long-term relationships, appropriate production models, market linkages, and community organization.

This program is distinct from the Holistic Water Program. It does not directly implement livelihood programs in communities served by the Holistic Water Program. Instead, it focuses on AIDFI's long-standing partnerships with two essential oil-producing communities: the Mambugsay Essential Oil Producers Association in Brgy. Mambugsay, Cauayan, Negros Occidental, and the Ananggue Essential Oil Producers Association in Sitio Ananggue, Brgy. Buenavista, Murcia, Negros Occidental.

The Social Sustainability Program supports community organizing, training, socially responsible and environmentally friendly production, market research, product marketing, and long-term partnership-building. It is guided by principles of gender equality and equity, women's empowerment and participation, good governance, sustainable development, fair trade, human rights, and total human development.

In communities served by the Holistic Water Program, livelihood activities such as backyard gardening, animal raising, improved sanitation, cleaner households, and stronger community cooperation may emerge as impacts of improved water availability. These are outcomes of water access rather than direct Social Sustainability Program interventions.

5. Innovation and Field-Based Learning

Innovation is central to AIDFI's identity. The organization develops and improves practical solutions based on the real conditions faced by rural communities and small water utilities. Its innovations are designed to be appropriate, repairable, affordable, locally understandable, and useful in places where conventional infrastructure is difficult or expensive to sustain.

AIDFI's field-based innovations include improved ram pump designs, trials on alternative drive pipe materials, household water filters, mobile data gathering, impact monitoring tools, mWater-based surveys, water system documentation, mechanical water kiosks, and practical NRW field methods.

The mechanical water kiosk is an important example of AIDFI's approach to innovation. In community-managed water systems, a kiosk is not only a water distribution point. It can support more organized access, tariff collection, accountability, reduced wastage, and better management by the water association. By improving how water is distributed and managed at the community level, the kiosk links technical design with local governance.

In the Holistic NRW Management Program, AIDFI's innovation is reflected in practical methods such as pilot DMAs, connection and pipeline verification, household meter replacement, accessible meter stub-outs, correlator-based leak detection, mWater-based data systems, and replication planning.

AIDFI's innovation model is grounded in learning by doing. Each project becomes a source of lessons that can improve future designs, strengthen community preparation, refine monitoring tools, and support replication.

6. Impact and Evidence of Change

AIDFI's impact is seen not only in the number of systems installed or communities reached, but in the long-term changes triggered by water access, stronger community organization, improved utility performance, and sustained livelihood partnerships.

Through the Holistic Water Program, AIDFI helps waterless and water-poor communities move from scarcity to reliability. Access to water reduces the burden of fetching water, especially for women, children, and elderly household members. It improves household sanitation, supports cleaner homes, allows domestic activities such as laundry to happen closer to the home, and creates better conditions for health, education, food production, and community cooperation.

Water access also becomes a development trigger. In many communities, the availability of water creates opportunities for backyard gardening, livestock raising, improved hygiene practices, stronger household productivity, and renewed community confidence. These livelihood-related improvements are impacts of water availability under the Holistic Water Program, not direct implementation of the Social Sustainability Program.

Through the Holistic NRW Management Program, AIDFI helps small water utilities protect scarce water resources and improve service efficiency. Utilities gain a clearer understanding of their systems through DMA work, meter management, leak detection, connection verification, and updated data.

Through the Social Sustainability Program, AIDFI demonstrates the value of long-term community accompaniment. Its partnerships with two essential oil-producing communities show that marginalized upland communities can become organized, productive, and economically active when supported through appropriate livelihood models, training, market linkages, and sustained relationships.

Impact Dimensions

Impact Dimension	What it Means
Water Access Impact	Communities gain more reliable access to water through appropriate technologies such as ram pumps and gravity-fed systems.
Social Impact	Women, children, and households benefit from reduced water-fetching burden, improved hygiene, better sanitation, cleaner homes, and stronger community cooperation.
Institutional Impact	Water associations, local technicians, and small utilities gain the capacity to manage, maintain, monitor, and improve their own systems.
Environmental and Climate Impact	Communities and utilities are encouraged to protect water sources, reduce wastage, improve water efficiency, and strengthen resilience to scarcity.
Economic and Livelihood Impact	Water availability enables household-level livelihood improvements in water communities, while the Social Sustainability Program demonstrates organized community enterprise through long-term essential oil partnerships.

7. Awards, Recognition, and Credibility

AIDFI's awards and recognitions are presented as organization-wide credibility and grouped by type of recognition. This keeps the profile clear while showing how AIDFI has been recognized for appropriate technology, water access, sustainability, social innovation, and community-rooted development.

Premier Institutional Recognition

Ramon Magsaysay Award — 2011 | Awardee

AIDFI's highest institutional recognition, awarded for its collective vision, technological innovations, and partnership practices in using appropriate technologies to improve the lives and livelihoods of rural poor communities.

- **RAFI Triennial Awards** — Finalist and Laureate
- **3rd ASEAN Leadership Award on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication** — 2017 | Awardee

Water, Energy, Sustainability, and Climate Recognition

- **Department of Energy First Green E-Award** — 2006 | Awardee
- **Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy** — 2007 | Winner
- **Energy Globe Award** — 2008 | Awardee
- **Energy Institute Awards** — 2010 | Community Initiative Award Winner
- **RELX Environmental Challenge** — 2015 | First Prize Winner
- **World Water Challenge** — 2020 | Outstanding Project / Second Place
- **Zayed Sustainability Prize** — 2020 | Finalist, Water Category
- **Prince Talal International Prize for Human Development** — 2022 | Winner, Fourth Category
- **Europa Awards** — 2022 | Winner, Water Resource Management Award
- **Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Water Award** — 2023 | Third Place Winner, Innovative Projects Award - Large Projects
- **Philippine Water Challenge** — 2023 | Finalist
- **WAFA - Water, Air, and Food Awards** — 2023 | Water Category Winner

Technology, Innovation, and Design Recognition

- **BBC World Challenge** — 2010 | Winner
- **Globe Future Makers / Singtel Future Makers** — 2019 | Winner / Top Social Innovator
- **Good Design Award Philippines** — 2022 | Red Awardee for the Mechanical Water Kiosk
- **Mansmith Innovation Awards** — 2023 | Winner / Top Innovator
- **GDN Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Project** — 2024 | Awardee

Social Innovation, Health, and Community Enterprise Recognition

- **BPI Foundation Sinag** — 2017 | Winner
- **Gelia Castillo Award for Research on Social Innovations in Health** — 2020 | Awardee / Recognized Social Innovation

- **WHO Western Pacific Innovation Challenge** — 2022 | Winner
- **Asia Pacific Social Innovation Partnership Award** — 2024 | Winner of Two Awards: Social Prosperity Award and Special Jury Prize
- **.ORG Impact Awards** — 2024 | Finalist

These recognitions confirm AIDFI's long-standing strength: practical technologies can empower communities, water access can trigger development, local ownership can sustain infrastructure, and long-term accompaniment can help marginalized communities move toward resilience.

8. Partnerships and Implementation Model

AIDFI works with communities, water associations, small water utilities, local government units, development partners, funders, civil society organizations, and technical partners. Its implementation model is collaborative because sustainable development requires both community ownership and institutional support.

For technical implementation, AIDFI partners with AIDFI Manufacturing, Innovations, and Technical Services. This partnership allows AIDFI to connect social preparation, technical survey, design, fabrication, installation, testing, and post-installation support within one coordinated model.

In communities, AIDFI works through water associations and local leaders. In utilities, AIDFI works with management and field teams to develop practical NRW methods. In livelihood partnerships, AIDFI works with organized associations to strengthen production, market links, and long-term enterprise development.

AIDFI's partnership model is based on shared responsibility: communities and utilities participate actively, local capacity is built, ownership is transferred or strengthened, and AIDFI continues to provide support beyond the initial intervention.

9. Closing Statement

AIDFI's work shows that water access can become more than infrastructure. It can become a pathway to health, dignity, livelihood, local governance, environmental protection, and resilience.

By combining appropriate technology, empowered communities, practical innovation, data-driven monitoring, and long-term support, AIDFI helps marginalized communities and small water utilities build systems that last - technically, socially, financially, and environmentally.

Central Message

From Water Access to Water Resilience.

10. Short Institutional Profile

Alternative Indigenous Development Foundation, Inc. (AIDFI) is a Philippine-based non-profit and community innovation organization that transforms water access into long-term resilience. Best known for its hydraulic ram pump technology, AIDFI works with underserved rural communities and small water utilities through appropriate technology, social preparation, local ownership, data-driven monitoring, and sustained support.

Its three main program pillars are the Holistic Water Program, which establishes community-managed water systems; the Holistic NRW Management Program, which helps small water utilities reduce water losses and improve service efficiency; and the Social Sustainability Program, which supports long-term livelihood partnerships with two essential oil-producing communities. Across its work, AIDFI builds local capacity, strengthens community institutions, supports practical innovation, and demonstrates that development can be owned and sustained by the people themselves.