

CITIZEN REPORT CARD ON WATER AND HEALTH SERVICES OF NAAWAN, MISAMIS ORIENTAL

I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results and findings of a Citizen Report Card (CRC) initiative focusing on water and health services in the municipality of Naawan, Misamis Oriental. The initiative was carried out by a team from the UP National College of Public Administration (UP-NCPAG), with guidance and advice from consultants from the Public Affairs Center (PAC) from Bangalore, India. It is part of a wider project implemented by UP-NCPAG to pilot test the implementation of two learning toolkits prepared for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI). Both toolkits—on continuous improvement and benchmarking (CIB) and on the citizen report card (CRC)—are intended to help improve the performance of local governments in public service delivery, and in becoming accountable to their citizens.

1.1 PROFILE OF THE MUNICIPALITY

Naawan is a 5th class municipality, which is located in the western part of the province of Misamis Oriental, Philippines. It has 10 Barangays, namely: Don Pedro, Linangkayan, Lubilan, Mapulog, Maouti, Mat-I, Pataga, Poblacion, Tagbalogo and Tuboran covering a total land area of 8,808 hectares. The Municipality of Naawan has a population of 16,173 people in 3,376 households (2000 Census). The three covered barangays of Linangkayan (13%), Maputi (13%), and Poblacion (21%) comprise the 3 largest barangays in terms of population.

Approximately 50% of Naawan's land area is composed of rugged and mountainous terrain, particularly in the eastern and interior portions covering most of the areas in barangays Lubilan, Tagbalogo, Mapulog, Mat-I and Tuburan. Landform toward the west is characterized by gently rolling and hilly terrain with strip of level lands along coastal areas. The total land area devoted to agriculture is 3,987 hectares 81% irrigation.

1.2 WHAT IS A CITIZEN REPORT CARD?

Essentially, the Citizen Report Card is a tool for participatory governance. It provides feedback and assessment on public services from the point of view of citizens or users of these services. The assessment is thus anchored on experience and not just on opinion, and can be useful as a diagnostic tool for any public agency (in this case, a local government) in identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses, and in benchmarking performance over time.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

Preliminary discussions were held with municipal officials of Naawan to discuss the purpose and objectives of the project and the usefulness of the CRC. The meetings helped clarify various aspects in the administration of water and health services.. A focus-group discussion was also conducted with a representative group of stakeholders from three barangays that were identified as the areas to be covered—Maputi, Linangcayan, and Poblacion. Information from discussions with municipal officials and from the focus-group helped design the set of standard questions and the field work. Subsequently, the questionnaire was administered to a sample of 200 households (with a sampling error of plus or minus 3) randomly selected in the three barangays to obtain primary information on water and health services. The interviews were carried out by barangay-based health workers trained and supervised by the UP-NCPAG Team and PAC consultants.

II. RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

The survey covered 200 households, with household heads as the primary units of observation. Majority of the respondents were female (60 percent). A greater number of the respondents came from Barangay Poblacion (46 percent), and the rest were from Barangays Linangcayan (28 percent) and Maputi (27 percent). Majority (60 percent) of the respondents were from the age range 31-55. Almost 30 percent were 56 years of age or older, and only 8 percent were aged 30 and below.

Over a third (36 percent) of the respondents completed high school, while 26 percent completed primary education. About 22 percent had completed college studies.

Household size varied, with a majority having 4 or less members, 15 percent having 6 members, while 12 percent had 5 members. A fifth (20 percent) had 7 or more members in their household. In most households (70 percent), at least 1 member was employed almost one-fourth (24 percent) reported having at least 2 members employed.

The main source of income were employment (34 percent) followed by agriculture, farming, livestock and fishing (26 percent) and business (22 percent).

III. DRINKING WATER SERVICES: MAJOR FINDINGS

III.1 WATER CONNECTION STATUS

Most (73 percent) of the respondents are connected to the NMWS/MEEDO, while 27 percent are not connected at the time of the survey.

The inability to meet the costs of connection was cited as the main reason for not being connected, in terms of affording the material costs (24 percent) and the connection fee (19 percent). About 26 percent, on the other hand, said they have their own sources of water.

The unconnected respondents source their water mainly from artesian wells (52 percent), from other people's water supply connections such as from neighbors (19 percent) and relatives (6 percent), and from a common Level II public faucet (17 percent).

Majority (57 percent) of the unconnected respondents do not pay any monthly expense for their water source. Nearly 10 percent, however, pay at least a hundred pesos for their water (equivalent to the cost of 15 cubic meters based on NMWS rates).

When asked if they would like to be connected to NMWS/MEEDO, 46 percent said they would rather stay unconnected, and only 37 percent said they would like to.

About 43 percent said they would like to be connected if the material costs were to be paid in installment, and 35 percent indicated that they are willing to pay 50 pesos for their monthly water bill.

A majority of both users and non-users (54 percent) think that if a pre-paid set-up is introduced for water usage, they will find it convenient.

III.2 APPLICATION AND INITIAL CONNECTION

Most respondents reported that the steps and procedures for applying and initial connection were complied with, although they varied in terms of attending the orientation for new applicants.

Steps and Procedures upon Application and Initial Connection	Steps and procedures were followed? (in percent; N=146)	
	Yes	No
Barangay clearance for residence verification	89.7	8.2
Submission of application form	96.6	3.4
Payment of tapping and subscription fees	90.4	9.6
Pre-installation conducted by NMWS	95.9	4.1
Estimate of materials given	90.4	9.6
Attendance in orientation for new applicants	56.2	43.8

From the table shown above, only 56% of the users attended the orientation. The reason for this is it was only introduced as a requirement last August 2006.

Of those who recalled submitting barangay clearances, almost all said that their applications for barangay clearances were processed within a day (96 percent).

The amount paid for tapping and subscription fees varied. About 43 percent reported paying PhP 200 pesos, while 26 percent paid PhP 230. However, 22 percent paid less than PhP 200, while 10 percent paid more than PhP 230 and even up to PhP 1,000. The reason for the latter is that, the respondent might have included the cost of installation materials in his/her response. The MEEDO staff attested that they have collected the full amount of PhP 230 from their clients as reflected in their copies of receipts.

The 10% who said that payment of tapping and subscription fees were not followed may not have been able to pay these fees.

Topics in the Orientation Seminar	Topics Discussed? (in percent; N=82)	
	Yes	No
Consumer classification	100	0
Rates	97.6	2.4
Fees and charges	95.1	1.2
Rights and responsibilities of users	98.8	1.2
Rights and responsibilities of MEEDO	100	0

Topics on consumer classification, rates, fees and charges, and rights and responsibilities of both MEEDO and users were discussed in the orientation seminar as recalled by almost all of the respondents. They were satisfied with how the orientation was conducted (98 percent), with 90 percent expressing complete satisfaction.

Length of time to be connected. Connection to the main water line from the household took from one to more than two days. For nearly half (47 percent), it took more than two days, while for about a third (34 percent), one day.

Satisfaction with NMWS/MEEDO staff during application. Nearly all (98 percent) of the users were satisfied with the NMWS/MEEDO staff during application, with 87 percent expressing complete satisfaction.

III.3 SERVICE QUALITY

Water Quality

Quality of Water	(in percent; N=146)	
Clarity	Clear (94)	Not clear (5)
Taste (Salty, sweet, stale)	Sweet (95)	Salty, stale (5)
Smell (No smell, foul)	No smell (99)	With smell (1)

Almost all (98 percent) expressed satisfaction with the quality of the water they receive, with 89 percent indicating complete satisfaction. The water was described as clear (94 percent), with a sweet taste (95 percent) and without any smell (99 percent).

Water Supply

Almost all of the respondents (99 percent) indicated that they receive a continuous, 24-hour water supply, although 86 percent cited some water disruptions.

Nearly all (98 percent) of the respondents reported that water pressure was strong enough to reach higher floors without booster pumps and the pressure was consistent most of the day. All (100 percent) said the water supply was adequate.

Nearly all (99 percent) were satisfied with the water supply, with 92 percent expressing complete satisfaction.

III.4 METER READING AND BILLING

Nearly all (99 percent) of the respondents reported that meter reading was done regularly (every last week of the month). A majority (65 percent) said that they receive information on volume of water consumed on the day the meter was read, while 34 percent got their information when the statement of account or bill is delivered.

Almost all (95 percent) stated that the meter reading was always accurate.

Most (94 percent) get their water bill in seven days or less after meter reading. Thirty (30 percent) receive the bill 5 days after; 26 percent get it in 7 days; while almost a fourth (23 percent) receive it in 3 days.

The bill is delivered to the household by NMWS/MEEDO staff (99 percent).

Nearly all (98 percent) expressed satisfaction with the billing system, with 87 percent indicating complete satisfaction.

III.5 PAYMENT

Most, if not all, of the respondents stated that clear information is given in the town hall on where to pay (100 percent); how to pay (98 percent); who can receive the payment (99 percent); and where to go for inquiries on the statement of accounts (98 percent).

All indicated that official receipts are issued as proof of payment. More than three-fourths (78 percent) said that a queuing system is followed when paying, while 22 percent said no system had to be followed as there were no other paying customers when payments were made.

It took less than 15 minutes for almost all of the respondents (97 percent) to complete their payment transactions.

Almost all of the respondents (99 percent) expressed satisfaction with the payment system, with 93 percent expressing complete satisfaction.

III.6 PROBLEM INCIDENCE, RESOLUTION AND RESPONSIVENESS, AND CORRUPTION

Almost all of the respondents (from 96 to 99 percent) reported that they did not face any problems in the last one year on their application for water connection, water quality, water supply, and billing. None had any problem with billing.

Six respondents or a mere 4 percent reported some problems on water quality regarding the cleanliness and clarity of water that they got. The complaints were relayed mainly through the meter reader, duly acknowledged by the NMWS/MEEDO, and appeared to have occurred only once. Two respondents acknowledged the immediate response from MEEDO, while another said that they were responded to after some delay. One respondent claimed he/she was not attended to. However, almost all considered the staff to be courteous, and moderately efficient, and were overall satisfied with the way the MEEDO staff handled their complaints.

All the six respondents did not cite any incidence of corruption or payment of bribes.

III.8 OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE SERVICES OF NMWS/MEEDO

Almost all (99 percent) of the respondents expressed overall satisfaction with the water service of NMWS/MEEDO, with 91 percent indicating full and complete satisfaction, and 6 percent citing partial satisfaction.

III.9 SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Asked for their comments and suggestions to improve water supply services, about 38 percent did not offer any suggestion but merely restated their satisfaction and encouraged NMWS/MEEDO to continue with its good water services. Twelve (12) percent made various suggestions regarding administration and maintenance, particularly on prevention and inspection of leaks and damaged pipes, maintaining consistency in the water supply, and providing information on such procedure such as chlorination and filtration. About 8 percent suggested a reduction in the water bill rate and reconsideration without penalties for late payments.

III.10 MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

The survey clearly indicates that the coverage of water services by NMWS/MEEDO is impressive and the agency needs to be commended for this excellent performance. However, there is evidence of spatial variations in the reach of the current network, especially in Maputi barangay where large numbers of residents use artesian wells to access water. Given the fact the quality of water from these wells has been a matter of concern and public discussion in the past, there is a strong need to bring more people in Maputi within the safe piped water system.

Since economic reasons emerged as a major cause for not getting connected, focused incentives like paying in installments and flexibility in options like pre-paid connection charges can be explored as possible solutions.

The survey has also found few evidences of non compliance to stated service norms and lack of uniformity in service standards.

III.11 ACTION POINTS

The Pilot CRC has provided clear pointers to the Municipal Government to improve its current high levels of performance. Some points for action and follow up are:

- ▶ Increasing the coverage of existing piped water supply by bringing more non users to the network. As discussed above, this can be done by exploring creative solutions like paying connection charges in installments and introducing options for prepaid consumption charges
- ▶ Transparency in service can be increased by proactively disclosing standards and norms of services and, also by strictly complying with stated service standards.

IV. HEALTH SERVICES: MAJOR FINDINGS

IV. 1 INCIDENCE OF ILLNESS

Of the total respondents, 64 or less than a third (32 percent) cited an illness in the family in the last six months. Two-thirds (67 percent) or 43 reported cases of cough, colds, fever and flu. Out of the 64 cases, 47 percent or 30 were taken to the Naawan Health Center—the health center nearest to their residence (26 out of 30). It is less than a kilometer for majority of those who were taken there (16).

All 30 reported the ready availability of a doctor at the time they went to the health center. In most cases (25), the doctor attended to the patient in less than 15 minutes.

All 30 found the doctor's chambers to be clean. Most of the patients were reported to have received all the prescribed medicines (25). While nearly all (29) reported the provision of free medicines, 4 reported the presence of expired medicines at the health center.

Only one case was reported of a patient paying a fee for treatment, but there was no information as to the amount paid and the purpose.

Except for one patient, all the others were reported to have been cured. This one patient was taken to a private doctor/hospital.

All 30 reported having been visited by a health worker, with whom they discussed topics on cleanliness (18) and vitamin supplements (7).

IV.2 HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY PROBLEMS

Of the 30 respondents, only three reported facing problems in the course of treatment at the health center. However, the nature of the problem in these three cases was not clear, but all three said that the problem was eventually solved.

IV.3 RESPONSIVENESS OF THE STAFF

All the 30 respondents found the staff to be courteous. Thirteen found the staff to be highly efficient. Almost all (29) were satisfied with the health center staff, with 26 completely satisfied.

IV.4 CORRUPTION

There were no reports of bribe being paid in the course of treatment.

IV.4 MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

The Feedback on health services is extremely positive and the same levels need to be sustained in future.

IV.5 ACTION POINTS

Quality of medicines provided at the Center need to be monitored and efficiency of staff need to be improved through training.

V. OVERALL RECOMMENDATION

The UP-NCPAG Team and the PAC consultants hope that the positive findings of the CRC survey would serve as an inspiration for the NMWS/MEEDO and NHC staff. However, those which need to be reformed and improved, like widening the water supply network and the issue of expired medicines being given to patients (is revealed by 4% of respondents), should be looked into by concerned municipal officials. The residents of Naawan are strongly encouraged to assist the municipal government solve problems related to service delivery. Cooperation could come in the form of providing feedbacks on areas to be improved. Experiences from this limited exercise show that the CRCs can be applied to elicit similar information on other services like education, roads, public markets, and micro finance.