

FUTURE SEARCH CASE

WATER RESOURCES ON CEBU ISLAND - PHILIPPINES

Dr. Han Rakels, *Perspectivity*

Efficient management of water resources and water regeneration capacity is crucial for the long term social and economic development of the province of Cebu. The island has minimal aquifers to rely on for its domestic, commercial and industrial use. Only sustainable management and development of its resources will allow Cebu to sustain its steadily growing need for water.

A Future Search process gathered all relevant stakeholders to formulate a shared vision, agreed strategies and feasible action plans to realize sustainable water resources and land use management.

1. General Background

Context

In the province of Cebu, a crucial factor for the sustainable social and economic development was the efficient management of its water resources and water regeneration capacity. Cebu has minimal aquifers to rely on for its domestic, commercial and industrial use. Only sustainable management and development of its resources would enable Cebu to sustain its steadily growing water need.

Environmental and natural resources management in the Philippines increasingly focused on the watershed and ecosystem approach, as outlined by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Cebu Uniting for Sustainable Water (CUSW), as the broadest multi-sectoral organisation, had focused its activities towards a sustainable approach in the protection, management and development of Cebu's water resources and supply.

CUSW, in cooperation with DENR and the Water Resources Center (WRC), submitted a proposal for a Future Search to the Royal Netherlands Embassy in June 2000. Netherlands' technical support was provided by Delft University of Technology in cooperation with Delft Hydraulics. Approval was granted in August.

The purpose of this Future Search was to consider the commitment and feasibility of addressing the water issues of Central Cebu. Under these assumptions, this workshop also served to facilitate the identifying of a roadmap into the future with concrete programs of activities for sustainable development.

Objectives

The Future Search aim was to encapsulate the situational issues in Central Cebu, relating to water resources and land-use management, strategic visioning with commitment of stakeholders, identifying the feasibility of a strategic management programme for water resources and land-use in Central Cebu and the outline of a master planning activity.

“The issues existed for almost 10 years, but there was a complete deadlock. There were just too many different, even opposing stakes.”

Expected output:

- Common problem encapsulation on water resources and land use issues.
- Shared vision on integrated approach water resources and land use.
- Agreed strategies/scenarios for sustainable water resources and land use management.
- Feasibility of a project on the development of a Masterplan for Central Cebu.
- Agreements on demonstration projects / activities.
- Workshop report and action plan.

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CHARACTERISTICS

Complicated: many parties, authorities and groups
Controversial: many different stakes, politically loaded
Urgent: no future water, environmental degradation
Long standing issue, no solution at hand

Prior to the Future Search, local authorities and international sponsors had been very reluctant to fund a project in Cebu. It was simply too risky.

Initiator: Cebu Uniting for Sustainable Water (NGO)
Sponsor: Royal Netherlands Embassy

SESSIONS AND PROCEEDINGS

Participants were involved in a series of sessions wherein they either worked individually, in stakeholder groups, in mixed groups, or plenary. This focus of these sessions evolved from a review of the past, the exploration of the present and creation of ideal future scenarios to the identification of common grounds, which formed the basis for plans of activities.

Session 1. Focus on the past: Highlights and milestones

Purpose: To get to know the recent past (where have we been) to establish a context for a shared future (where do we want to go): "The past is the prelude to the future".

Outcome: A story of the past (trends and general patterns) and an understanding of what we can learn from the past.

Session 2. Focus on the present: Current trends

Purpose: Create a shared vision of the world we live in and experience the whole together.

Outcome: A Mind Map which reflects all relevant trends in society that have an impact on Central Cebu Water Resources and Land Management, positive and negative; a prioritisation of these trends and a grouping in clusters.

Session 3. Stakeholder perspectives: Present trends

Purpose: Find out what stakeholders care about, what they are doing now, and what they want to do (and are NOT doing now).

Outcome: Most important trends for each stakeholder group.

Session 4. Owning the present: Prouds and sorries

Purpose: Accepting our feelings about what we are doing now.

Outcome: Identification of prouds and sorries of all stakeholders and how they feel about it. Taking responsibility.

Session 5. Focus on the future

Purpose: To imagine a future world you want to work towards.

Outcome: A creative performance illustrating your future world

Session 6. Common ground on the future

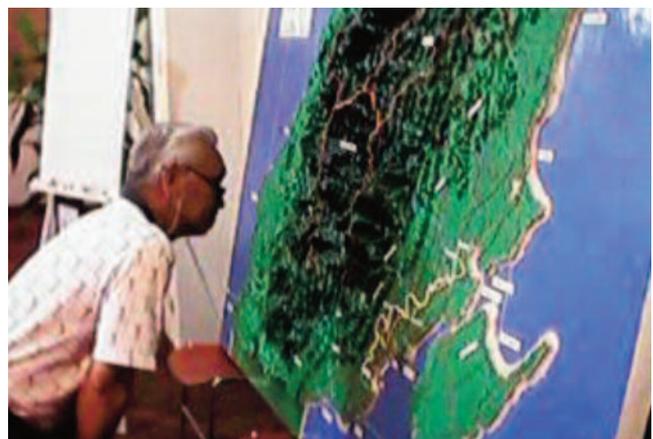
Purpose: To discover the common future desired by the whole conference.

Outcome: Shared ideas on common futures (where we want to go). Potential programs and activities (how to get there).

Session 7. Planning for the future

Purpose: To identify short and long term action steps. What are steps you want to take RIGHT NOW to work towards your common future agenda.

Outcome: Concrete programmes and activities.



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3. Final Outcomes and Action Programs

Based on an analysis of the outcomes of trends (external factors) and desired future scenarios (what are we doing now and what should be done) seven program themes for actions were identified:

1. Community extension and awareness
2. Socio-economic and livelihood
3. Environmental protection and bio-diversity
4. Pollution control and sanitation
5. Soil and water conservation
6. Policy / systems analysis
7. Capacity and institution building

Participants were asked to suggest specific actions to be taken to improve the water resources and land use situation in Central Cebu. The (about 150) proposed actions were categorized according to these themes and worked out in (rough outlines) of action programs. This resulted in 18 programs (the details are available on request).

Table 1 gives an overview of the resulting programs. Some programs are strongly connected and share specific actions. These final outcomes were based on common ground and general consensus.

Table 1. Overview of proposed feasible action plans

		Programme 1	Programme 2	Programme 3	Programme 4
1	Community extension and awareness	Community IEC (preparation material, training, dissemination)	Political IEC (lobby group, mass base, partnership consultant.)		
2	Socio-economic and livelihood	Institutionalise environmentally friendly livelihood (fruit-trees, bee keeping, cut-flower and vegetables)			
3	Environmental protection and bio-diversity	Biodiversity (identify critical watersheds and use these as demo areas)	Assure environmental protection (identify environmental destructive and friendly practices)		
4	Pollution control and sanitation	Integrated waste water management (IEC, enforcement, M&E team, recycling, infrastructure)	Integrate solid waste management (IEC, enforcement, M&E team recycling, infrastructure)		
5	Soil and water conservation	Watershed management (re-forestation, app. upland farming, check dams)	Rainwater harvesting (feasibility study, pilot implementation, actual implementation)	Water supply (sources, feasible dual piping, monitoring sea water intrusion)	
6	Policy / systems analysis	Strategic management plan (integrating program 2, 3 and 4), DSS	Study on human elements (population, migration, practices)	Study on bio-physical elements / database (land, water, ecology)	Review of policies (land tenure, 'clean water' policy, etc.)
7	Capacity and institution building	Watershed series training and seminars	Development livelihood oriented professional associations	Strengthening CUSW (membership, monitoring & evaluation, executive staff, pool of experts)	PO capacity building

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4. What Happened Next?

Maybe the most important outcome of the Future Search was that an impasse was lifted, a deadlock broken, movement created. Movement with vision and trust.

Water had long been an emotional issue in Cebu. Over the two decades, it had been recognized that Metro Cebu was facing an impending water supply crisis. Sustainable social and economic developments in Cebu Province increasingly depended on water supply, especially in heavily urbanized and industrializing areas. The rapid industrialization and high population of the area coupled with a fragile small island ecosystem brought about the present concern.

Metro Cebu traditionally relied mainly on the underground aquifers, but there was consensus that present extraction rates were not sustainable. This was most evident in saltwater intrusion of coastal aquifers as far as three km inland. The aquifers are replenished by groundwater flows that originate from the upland watersheds. In view of the high annual rainfall received by the province, the tapping of surface water from the watershed areas is presently considered.

The watersheds of Cebu added another, complex dimension to the water supply equation. Given the high population density, land scarcity was most acute in Central Cebu. The watershed areas were teeming with people, those that have been historically settled there and those that wish to develop the area for lack of space in the lowlands.

Only with efficient management and development of its water resources and water regeneration capacity Cebu envisioned to being able to sustain its steadily growing need for water.

After the Future Search a 5-year programme, WATER REMIND, took off. Many parties invested heavily, something that had been unthinkable before (nobody would risk a peso in this polarized situation). This was a great sign of commitment. A great sign of something crucial had taken place.

Yet, a Future Search is just a short moment in years of development and the project later had its ups and downs. The challenge will always remain to maintain the dialogue between parties, before they start to polarize again and drift apart. Future Search helps them do that, one small step at the time.

ABOUT PERSPECTIVITY

Perspectivity is a group of passionate professionals who build inspiring collaborations for sustainable growth. In current times of increasing complexity, blue prints have become obsolete. As Perspectivity, we dare to look at the world upside down and invite you to do the same. We bring a fresh perspective!

Perspectivity works with groups and individuals to address complex realities in organisations and communities. We engage people from all walks of life, people with differing interests and perceptions. We help them to find common ground to work productively together towards shared goals, even when differences seem impossible to bridge. We let harmony emerge out of complexity.

We are experts in engagement and change processes that we use with public, private and voluntary sector organisations across the world. We are values-driven and guided by the 'Perspectivity Passion Code'. At its heart is a desire to use our professional skills to support organisations, communities and individuals who are facing complexity. We help them to arrive at better and more productive collaborations, by understanding a common picture of the world, and by applying their own talents and ambitions to achieving a common goal.

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www.perspectivity.org
enterprise@perspectivity.org