

Water of Freedom

President Corazon Aquino drew water from a plastic handpump when she visited Nueva Ecija Province to mark the completion of low-cost water supply projects in 15 Philippine provinces.

The projects were implemented by the "Tubigan ng Kalayaan" (Water of Freedom) Program initiated by the Philippine Business for Social Progress, a philanthropic agency set up by members of the local business community.

The handpump adopted by the program was designed and manufactured by the Engineering Department of the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The pump is the product of a research project sponsored by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada.

The inexpensive pump is unique in several ways: made from plastic, it does not rust and is built to withstand the high level of stress and abuse which pumps routinely receive in rural areas. If the pump does break down, its simple design allows villagers, particularly women, to carry out the necessary repairs by themselves.

The prototype for this remarkable plastic pump was developed by the University of Waterloo in Canada. Engineers at the University of Malaya have since modified the Waterloo design to suit local conditions. They are now manufacturing their model for ASEAN countries under the trade-name "Unimade".

The handpump, however, cannot be installed in areas where the water-table is lower than 20 metres. In areas with such low water-tables, the "Tubigan ng Kalayaan" Program opted for the building of rainwater storage tanks.

The first tank was built in the backyard of Bangkal Elementary School in the town of Sapián by the Capiz Development Foundation with support provided by IDRC. IDRC funding enabled the foundation's staff to perfect their construction techniques through the building of 30 more tanks. The foundation is now busy building an additional 150 tanks: 50 to be funded by the "Tubigan ng Kalayaan" Program and 100 by UNICEF.

When all projects in the "Tubigan ng Kalayaan" Program are completed, villagers affected will be "freed" from the problems of a scarce water supply — as the children of Bangkal Elementary School now are. They used to bring their own drinking water to school. Water their parents fetched from a river one kilometre and a half from the village. Now these villagers have all the water they need in their own backyard.



President Aquino checking out the pump.

Negros Development Fund

Recognizing the economic and social effects the collapse of the sugar industry is having on the province of Negros Occidental, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) established the Negros Rehabilitation and Development Fund.

\$11-million

With a budget of C\$11-million, the fund is intended for non-governmental organizations involved in socio-economic development programs; primarily income generating projects in four main areas: agricultural diversification; agro forestry;

microenterprise/livelihood; and agro industrialization.

The program committee, made up of people from Negros, sets policies and recommends projects for approval by the Canadian Ambassador to the Philippines.

A co-ordinating officer distributes information, receives and analyzes proposals and carries out project monitoring and evaluation.

A unique feature of the fund is that upon approval, the money goes directly to the organization thus greatly reducing the time needed to disperse funds.

This new development assistance program by CIDA has the potential to create maximum impact in minimum time.