

YAMOG and Green Empowerment: A Mindanao Partnership

Friday, 11 June 2010

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YAMOG and Green Empowerment first established contact, which soon ripened into a full partnership, during a trip in October 2000. Green Empowerment Executive Director Michael Royce, Program Manager Joseph Richards, and Board member Francie Royce spent four days meeting with YAMOG staff and visiting their project at Megkawayan and Polocon, Davao City.

Since that time, Green Empowerment has helped YAMOG raise its technical level through participation in a pico hydro training in Nepal in 2001, a week long training on micro hydro in Malaysia, a three-week course on turbines and electrical controllers for micro hydro projects in Bandung, Indonesia in 2003, a 2005 solar training, and a 2007 course on solar water pumping. In addition, Green Empowerment has worked with YAMOG on joint fundraising for a number of their projects and in networking with other NGOs and international organizations.

Reflecting on this friendship of ten years, Nazario "Nonoy" Cacayan, Executive Director of YAMOG, commented during an interview on March 11th and 12th, 2010. "Our partnership with Green Empowerment has always been rooted in mutual respect. We share the same vision of community-based development towards sustainable development."

"We have always valued and benefited from the technology trainings and skill transfers conducted by Green Empowerment and hope that this will continue in the future, particularly as YAMOG starts to diversify its technical skills into biomass/biogas and wind."

“The networking through Green Empowerment has also been useful, not only in connecting us to foreign funding groups such as Seacology, but also with other NGOs in Green Empowerment’s network here in the Philippines such as AIDFI and SIBAT. Often, too, Green Empowerment has worked with YAMOG in building the strength of our partnerships with other groups such as the Peace and Equity Foundation, AMORE and Winrock.”

“Looking to the next three to five years, we hope that Green Empowerment will help us package our proposals to larger funding organizations, as we move from single village projects to regional plans involving 4-5 villages each. The Mindanao Renewable Energy Network (MREN), a network of 17 NGOs and Peoples’ Organizations (POs) from the villages in which YAMOG has worked, wants to become more involved in advocacy around renewable energy issues both at the local and national level. Green Empowerment can help us reach a larger audience.”

“Another big issue for us is strengthening our base for YAMOG’s own organizational sustainability. YAMOG continues to face this challenge to achieve sustainability. We have started a few measures on this like website establishment, and is looking into professionalizing our technical fees and training for sustainability. Green Empowerment has worked with us on this issue in the past, but it is a very vital question for YAMOG. One aspect of this might be Green Empowerment’s assistance in strengthening our web presence so that more funding organizations can see and evaluate our work. But we are also open to technology transfers, consulting, multi-year grants and other means whereby YAMOG can establish itself on a more stable and long-term basis financially.”