PhATS Field Note

Demand Creation in Communities

June 2015

MONITORING ZOD IN EASTERN VISAYAS THROUGH AN ODK PLATFORM

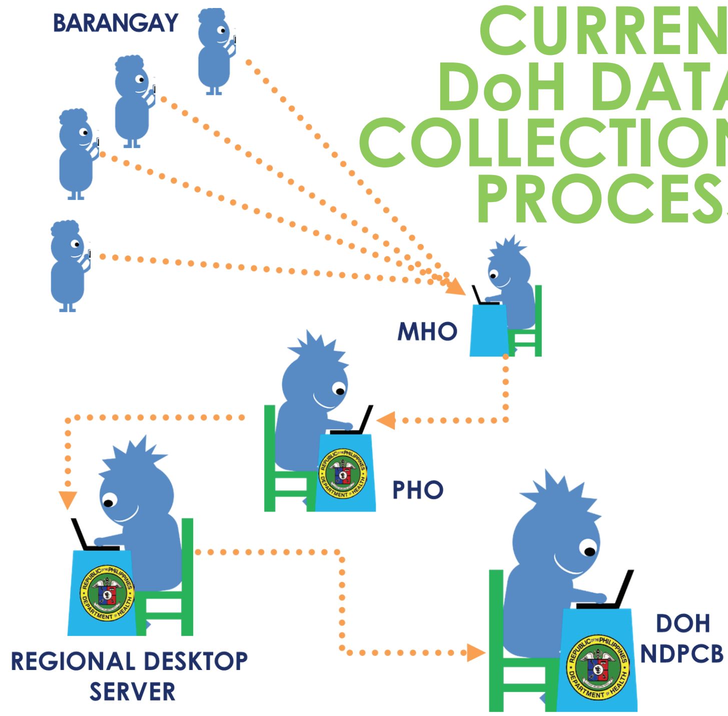
BOTTLENECKS IN MONITORING SANITATION PERFORMANCE

The Philippines Department of Health (DoH) public information management system, known as the Field Health Services Information Management System (FHSIS), currently collects sanitation data at the household level.

As an official national statistics system, the FHSIS monitors activities in each of the DoH programs on a routine basis (monthly, quarterly, annually) from the barangay up to the national level. Currently, the FHSIS collects three indicators for WaSH: households with sanitary toilets; households with satisfactory disposal of solid waste; and households with complete basic sanitation facilities. FHSIS is intended as a system for evidenced-based reporting which supports the government to develop plans to address critical health issues, particularly for water and sanitation. For health care providers, the daunting task of collecting real-time and quality data lies in the capacity of monitors, processes, tools for collecting data and quality assurance. In relation to Zero Open Defecation (ZOD) monitoring, the current system does not reflect accurate gains in national ZOD performance due to ambiguous definition of indicators.

Paper-based data collection is the current practice in most barangays, municipalities and some provinces. Traditionally, the timeliness, accuracy, and relevance of paper-based data collection has been unreliable. Ideally, collected Data is validated by the Rural Health Unit (RHU) and Provincial Health Office (PHO) as part of a quality assurance process before it is encoded to the DoH database. As a result, LGUs have a long backlog of data to address before they are able to submit it to the DoH. The turn-around time for the LGU to submit a report to the region usually takes anywhere from weeks to months, and oftentimes no submission is made at all, nullifying the entire attempt and weakening the overall report.

CURRENT DoH DATA COLLECTION PROCESS



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BARANGAY FIELD
Barangay Level Field Form
Data from the field is collected manually
FREQUENCY: Weekly

MUNICIPAL/CITY LEVEL
Paper-based forms are collected and manually consolidated by the RSI
FREQUENCY: Monthly

PROVINCIAL LEVEL
Data from the field is consolidated and sent via email or submitted via USB
FREQUENCY: Monthly

REGIONAL LEVEL
Data from the field is consolidated and sent via email or submitted via USBs
FREQUENCY: Quarterly

NATIONAL LEVEL
Data from the field is consolidated and sent via email or submitted via USB
FREQUENCY: Annually

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Other disadvantages to paper-based data collection include:

- Risk of human error is high when during both the initial recording of data and consolidation; LGU performance is often misrepresented.
- Submission of reports to the RHU and/or PHO via courier providers is vulnerable to delay, theft, destruction and loss.

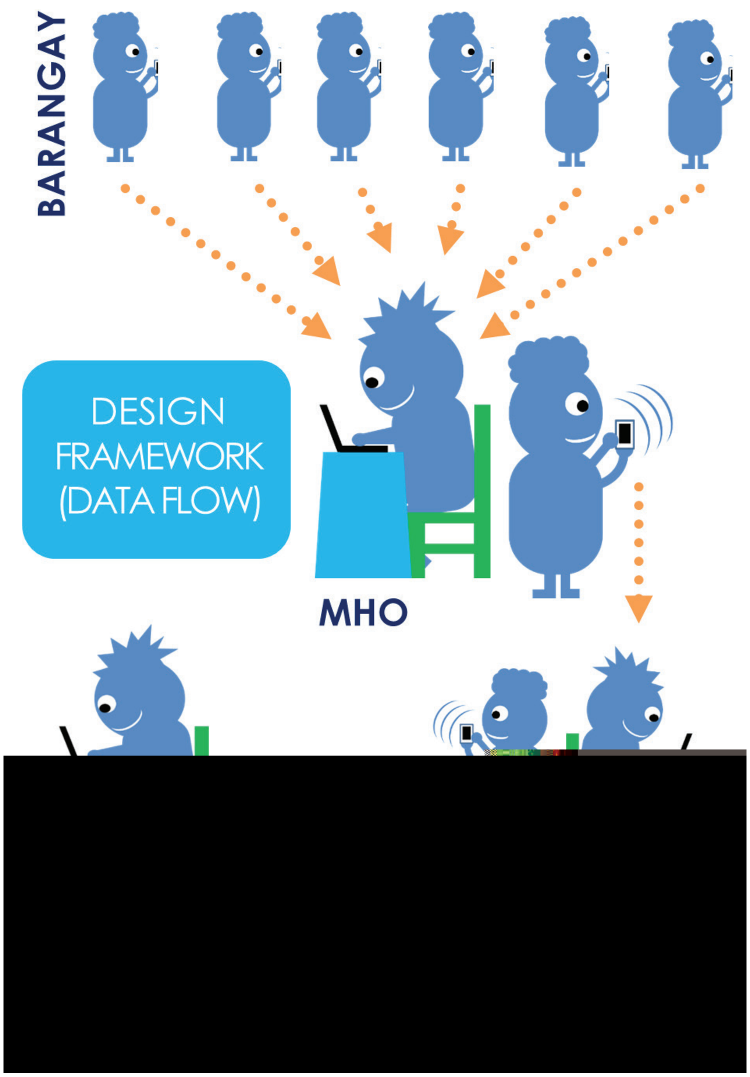
Recognizing the need for an efficient process to collect ZOD data, UNICEF is supporting the DoH to build a ZOD monitoring system to optimize ZOD data collection from LGUs with existing platforms and in alignment with the DoH's National Sustainable Sanitation Plan (NSSP).

As part of the process to build this system, UNICEF conducted a consultation with partners in Capiz, Iloilo, Masbate, Mindanao, Eastern Samar and Leyte on the current ZOD monitoring activities. Discussion was centered around current collection tools being used, learnings, approaches and best practices in the field. Likewise, the consultation sought to understand how the system works, harmonizing ZOD indicators and exploring scalable models in order to optimize existing processes.

Eastern Visayas, particularly in Typhoon Haiyan-affected LGUs, is a strong candidate for developing a scalable model for ZOD monitoring. Coming from a large scale emergency, the DoH, UNICEF and its NGO partners have been successfully implementing the Phased Approach to Total Sanitation (PhATS) since July 2014 with 430 barangays declared and certified ZOD by DoH Region 8.

DoH Region 8 cooperates and closely coordinates with INGO partners and LGUs to monitor progress in the field in order

DESIGNED FRAMEWORK FOR DIGITIZED ZOD MONITORING



Representatives from the DoH try out the ODK app for ZOD data collection during a ZOD Monitoring Training held in Tacloban City.

PAPER

BARANGAY FIELD DATA COLLECTION
Barangay Level Field Form is completed by local health workers; initial data is still collected manually at the household level.

SERVER & ODK

MUNICIPAL/CITY LEVEL CONSOLIDATION
Consolidates data from the field and generates municipal level analysis & report for transmission to the provincial server.

PROVINCIAL LEVEL CONSOLIDATION
Server receives data from the municipalities and consolidates data from the field, generating provincial-level analysis and reports for transmission to the DoH's regional server.

REGIONAL LEVEL CONSOLIDATION
Server receives data from the municipalities via the main DoH server

LESSONS LEARNED

By putting to scale a digitized ZOD monitoring system, Eastern Visayas will enable to record ZOD performance of LGUs using real-time data to address sanitation issues. However, there are challenges which need to be addressed in order to sustain the current initiative of the DoH.

The DoH recognizes the need to improve current data collection systems; this initiative is a substantial step towards testing scalable models and optimizing current monitoring infrastructures. With so much new technology, it would be irresponsible to ignore the opportunity to integrate new platforms into existing systems to improve efficiency and productivity in ZOD monitoring. The DoH recognized this need and was able to capitalize and express it.

The scale of PhATS implementation across Typhoon Haiyan-affected areas has provided the opportunity for testing a platform for digitized ZOD monitoring because of its geographic reach, high number of ZOD barangays, well-established implementation process and system, deep commitment of LGUs and the DoH Region 8, and its high capacity of sanitary inspectors to carry out monitoring activities in the field. PhATS is itself a showcase for best practice in ZOD monitoring. UNICEF's existing partnership with the DoH at both and the national and sub-national level facilitated the process to implement the concept into operational activities

Tools for digitized ZOD monitoring will require financial investment from lower income LGUs, such as internet-capable smartphones, laptops, pre-paid data coverage load, and continuous capacity development and technical support for IT staff, RSIs and Barangay Health Workers, to move forward with the platform. This factor should be considered by the DoH and DILG as a possible roadblock to progress.

Similarly, some barangays or municipalities don't have mobile or internet connectivity, particularly geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. Until the widening of cellular and data coverage, paper-based collection and processing methods remain the only option for health workers and researches in these areas.

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ABOVE: Claudia and Miguel Cabilig of Barangay Catipunan, Pastrana, Leyte show off their newly built latrine with sealed septic tank. RIGHT: Many families across Yolanda-affected areas have CRs like this one, where waste falls directly into an open water source. Thanks to the PhATS campaign to end open defecation, hundreds of communities have since upgraded to using improved latrines like Claudia and Miguel.

NEXT STEPS

The process of implementing digitized ZOD monitoring in the field is ongoing. Field testing is being carried out by trained RSIs and information is currently being managed by UNICEF. As an important step, the DoH Region 8 and UNICEF will carry out a process review to capture the lessons learned and assess scalability of the model both in and outside Region 8. Further work will be done to support and transition the management of the digitized ZOD monitoring system from UNICEF to the DoH.

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