



PHILIPPINES PROJECT (24)
PANGASINAN



It is quite easy to access water in the Pangasinan province, but how safe is the water? Of those with access to water, only 20 percent drink safe water from their household faucets. This is a hotspot for cholera and typhoid outbreaks and, water is unsafe with e-coli fecal contamination.

The area is particularly susceptible to water problems because of the porous nature of the land, a lack of understanding for proper hygiene behaviors, no garbage sanitation, and the three tributary rivers flowing into the area that carry waste.

At least 764 million pesos (approximately 15 million USD) is needed to improve the water conditions – and residents hope private donors will extend support. Something has to be done to improve the water and sanitation issues confronting the residents of Pangasinan or they will be forced to import water from other provinces, placing further financial burdens on an already teetering balance for survival.

The situation needs to be addressed on many fronts: institutionalizing safe water systems and management, proper toilet installation, waste management (sanitary landfills), and hygiene education to change behaviors.

Six-year-old “Sam” and his four siblings live on the river, surrounded by pollution that floats atop and stands below – built up over generations. Impurities cause intense odor. Sam, his brothers and sister are like most children in their school who frequently miss classes due to illnesses caused by many food or water diseases, and the lack of modern hygiene knowledge and practices.

