

Philippines : solidarity with the survivors of Super Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda - April and May 2014 activities aimed at enhancing the survivors' capacity to cope with a situation of abject poverty

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We are reproducing below Mi-HANDs's « Early Recovery and Rehabilitation Update » n° 3. The activities described here are now more focused on enhancing the survivors' capacity to cope with the poverty lingering since the disastrous Super Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) struck in Ormoc City & Northern Leyte.

After the launching of MiHANDs Early Recovery and Rehabilitation phase, three seminars on **Disaster Risk Reduction - Climate Change Adaptation (DRR-CCA)** was conducted in March 2014 in the three barangays of Lat-osan in Palompon, Bangkal in Villaba and Don Potenciano Larrazabal (DPL) in Ormoc City. One hundred Sixty Two (162) individuals composed of 69 men and 93 women coming from different sectors attended the seminars on DRR-CCA, such as farmers, women, senior citizen and youth. Another activity that was also conducted in the later part of March was **Hand Washing and Distribution of Dental Kits** to 184 elementary pupils in Lat-osan Elementary School.



Children at Lat-osan Elementary School learning the proper technique of hand washing.

Activities in April and May started shifting more into the heart of early recovery and rehabilitation. It is now more focused on enhancing the survivors' capacity to cope with the abject poverty that had been lingering ever since the disastrous Super Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) struck. Most of these activities were conducted in barangay Lat-osan, Palompon and the participant were predominantly women. Close monitoring and documentation of the resulting effects and lessons learned were done during the whole process. After conducting a comprehensive assessment and review of the documentation, it can be a basis for replication in the other two barangays of Bangkal and DPL.

The first activity conducted in April 12, 2014 was training on **Food Processing**. It focused on processing of food available in local market to generate income and extend its shelf life for later consumption of the families of the survivors. Forty-Seven (47) women in barangay Lat-osan attended the training where they learned the procedure in processing banana chips, squash maja and coco biscuit. The resource person of the training was Nora Pandi a staff of Kaagapay-OFW Resource and Service Center, Inc. (Kaagapay-OFWRSC), a member organization of MiHANDs based in Cotabato City. Romelyn Cruz, also one of their personnel, briefly presented the Kaagapay-OFWRSC organizational information and then the basic hygiene requirement before the actual cooking. Through this training, the participants realized that food ingredient like squash has uses other than its traditional use as vegetable. "Sapal", the main ingredient of the coco biscuit, is the leftover after extracting coconut milk from coconut flesh and is regarded to be useless or fed to animals, is a good source of dietary fiber. "Dietary fiber has protective effect against cardiovascular diseases, colon cancer, and diabetes" and has cholesterol-lowering effects among adults with moderately raised cholesterol level [1].



Preparing the ingredients for squash maja.

The second activity conducted on April 28, 2014 was a seminar workshop on **Backyard Gardening**. Inputs given were Bio Intensive Gardening-Food Always In The Home (BIG-FAITH) and procedures in making liquefied Organic Fertilizer. Fifty participants and mostly women from barangay Lat-osan learned the concepts and procedures of backyard gardening. Demonstration on the actual procedure of making Fermented Plant Juice (FPJ) and Fermented Fruit Juice (FFJ) was done by some participants using banana trunks, fruits and brown sugar. Arlieto Berlan, MiHANDs coordinator was the resource person of this seminar workshop.



Participants listening to instructions on how to make FPJ and FFJ organic fertilizer.

Activities in May started with **Basic Health Skills Training** that was conducted on May 1, 2014. Inputs given included sign and symptoms of simple illnesses, identification of herbal plants and procedures and actual processing of herbal medicine. Resource person for this training was Melinda B. Gallego, Health Program Coordinator of the Mindanao Tri-peoples Women Resource Center, Inc. (MTWRC) also a member organization of MiHANDs and based in Cotabato City. There were many herbal plants in their barangay that the participants did not know before. The herbal plants could be processed into herbal medicine and can be a substitute for the very expensive synthetic ones. They also realized that what they needed was a little skills upgrading in herbal medicine processing to be

able to make affordable medicine for their families and that the training was very timely and a welcome and appreciated skills upgrading on their part.



Preparing the ingredients for panyawan ointment.

An **Awareness and Education** activity was conducted on May 3, 2014 to discuss on Philippine and global disaster situation, Illegal recruitment and human trafficking and internally displaced persons (IDPs) rights. After the inputs, a group workshop was conducted and the participants were divided according to thematic issues such as health, education, environment, livelihood and peace and order. The output of the workshop will serve as basis for further discussion and future intervention. Ms. Goldy Omelio, admin officer of Kaagapay-OFWRSC served as main facilitator of the activity while Arlieto Berlan presented the Philippine disaster situationer, Romelyn Cruz presented the Illegal recruitment and human trafficking and John Montilla presented the IPDs rights. Seventy individuals participated in the activity with 59 females and 11 males.



Arlieto Berlan discussing the Philippine disaster situationer.

A **Play Therapy and Stress Debriefing Activity** was conducted on May 5, 2014 for adult members of the community in barangay Lat-osan. Participants were 30 females and 37 males representing the youth, farmers and women sectors. The participants were made to share on their experiences in life and in their families. They also participated in educational games and felt a feeling of relief after playing the games. It was their first time to experience such kind of activity for adults.



Play therapy and dtress debriefing activity.

Utensil and other equipment used in the food processing, backyard gardening and basic health skills training were turned over to the local women's' organization.

The series of activities conducted brought the survivors in barangay Lat-osan closer to each other and as a result three grassroots organization had its formal induction of officer on May 12, 2014 during the celebration of their town's annual fiesta. The three grassroots organizations are **Uswag Kababaihan Association (UKA)**, **Lat-osan Farmers Organization (LFO)** and **Kauswagang Batan-on sa Lat-osan (KBL)**. Such sectoral formation was on the process of applying for their registration with government line agency in order to access support services in relation with their on-going recovery and rehabilitation.



Officers of Uswag Kababaihan Association (UKA).

A twist from the usual activities being conducted was the visit from **Global Fund for Women**, the funding partner of Kaagapay-OFWRSC for their activities conducted with MiHANDs in barangay Lat-osan. The Global fund team conducted discussion and sharing regarding the effectiveness of the intervention introduced by Kaagapay-OFWRSC and MiHANDs. How it helped them cope after the disaster. The Global Fund team also visited some of the destroyed houses and they appreciated the sectoral organizing towards local capacity strengthening initiated by MiHANDs.



Global Fund representative Eva Kolodner, Mary Jane Real (consultant) and Maria Angela Villaba in Brgy. Lat-osan.

The community including some of the barangay officials thanked the team for their support and expressed the need for additional funding for the on-going recovery of their source of income.

Mi-HANDs

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The international funding campaign continues. Donations can be sent through ESSF.

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We will keep you informed through our website of the state of the permanent solidarity fund and how it is utilized.

P.S.

* <http://www.mihands.org/>

Footnotes

[1] <http://www.fnri.dost.gov.ph/files/fnri%20files/wp/coconut2.htm>