

Caraga

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FRONTLINE

Bayabas Town: Champion on environmental preservation

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DSWD celebrate Elderly Week, Recognize Centenarian Caraganons

As a prelude to the Elderly Filipino Week celebration, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office Caraga recognized in felicitation the centenarians of Bayabas and Carmen, Surigao del Sur last September 15-16, 2020.

The first Sunday of October is declared as the National Respect for Centenarians Day which is also part of the annual celebration of the Elderly Filipino Week on October 1-7, 2020.

Centenarians, Maria Dolores T. Laguna of Bayabas, Surigao del Sur and Abundancia L. Josol, from Carmen, Surigao del Sur, were awarded a certificate of recognition from DSWD FO Caraga and felicitation/greetings from President Rodrigo Roa Duterte on September 15 and 16, respectively.

The tribute exclusive for centenarians is in recognition of the Republic Act 10868 or “An Act Honoring and Granting Additional Benefits and Privileges to Filipino Centenarians, and For Other Purposes”, prescribing that Filipinos who live two or beyond 100 years of age will be given a letter of felicitation signed by the President. The law also covers all Filipino centenarians living abroad.

Accordingly, qualified Filipino centenarians shall submit their birth certificate or a valid Philippine passport. In the absence of these two (2) primary identification cards, any two (2) of the following secondary documents may also be accepted: marriage certificate, birth certificate, affidavits, old school or employment records, baptismal or confirmation records of a centenarian, overseas voting card or affidavit, foreign driver's license, and medical or health card.

For those living abroad, documents may be submitted to the Philippine Embassy or Consulate with the jurisdiction in the area. The Commission on Filipinos Overseas shall evaluate all applications and endorse the qualified applicants to DSWD. DSWD shall then coordinate with the Department of Foreign Affairs for the transmittal of felicitation letter and cash gift from the national government. Lastly, DSWD shall also endorse the list of qualified centenarians to their respective Local



Maria Dolores T. Laguna, 100 years old from Bayabas, Surigao del Sur.



Abundancia L. Josol, 100 years old from Carmen, Surigao del Sur.

Government Units (LGUs) for processing of local awards and incentives.

Amid the threat of the Novel Coronavirus Disease, also known as COVID-19, DSWD FO Caraga conducted the house-to-house delivery scheme for the centenarians in consideration of the beneficiaries' health and physical limitations. This scheme is more convenient for the centenarians as well as to their relatives considering that the government is encouraging seniors to stay at home as part of the health and safety protocols.#

Barangay Sua: A decade of mangrove preservation

Climate Change has been felt all over the world, but the Philippines is one of the countries most affected by it. According to the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration or PAGASA, the warming of the climate system since the mid-20th century is due to human activities. It includes the increase of greenhouse gas concentrations from burning fossil fuels and land-use change.

With the geographical location of the Philippines, it has over 1700 island-communities that are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. It is highly probable that sea level rise will happen due to the changing climate, and low-lying islands will face permanent inundation in the future. The combined effects of continued temperature increases, changes in rainfall and accelerated sea level rise, and tropical cyclone including the associated storm surge would expose coastal communities to threat to life and property.

With these threats brought by climate change, the small island Barangay of Sua in the Municipality of Barobo, Surigao del Sur started its initiative to grow mangroves along its coastline. Mangroves are salt-tolerant

trees that have adapted to living in salt and brackish water conditions. According to the Manila Times, mangrove forests act as nurseries for marine organisms, including different species of fish, crustaceans, and mollusks, home to birds, insects, and other wildlife.

Since mangrove forests serve as the buffer between land and sea, it can protect coastal communities from storm surges caused by typhoons and can control erosion along the shoreline. Mangrove forests can store up to four times carbon per hectare than rainforests.

"Tuig 2000 nagsugod na jud mi dinhia og tanom og mga bakhawan (In the year 2000, we started to plant mangrove propagules here)," Pedro Sombrio, Barangay Kagawad in Sua shared as he reminisced the old times.

Being said that, Barangay Sua started its mangrove tree growing in the year 2000. It was then followed by a project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through its livelihood assistance to the women association in the barangay. After that, another project was implemented in the barangay by the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Council,

As seen up-close, the mangrove forest which was preserved and continuously rehabilitated for over a decade.

and several agencies came after it until today. These agencies were able to help Barangay Sua in strengthening its advocacy of Mangrove preservation and reforestation.

In 2019, the municipality of Barobo was again a recipient of another program, this time from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), through its Risk Resiliency Program – Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Program (RRP-CCAM). RRP-CCAM mainly aims to strengthen the resiliency of both natural systems and the urban built environment, as well as the adaptive capacities of vulnerable groups and communities.

“Ang bakhawan amo ni siyang ipadayon palanggaon, kay para sad kini sa atong mga kabataan (We will continue to rehabilitate and take care of the Mangrove forest for the future generations),” Sombrio said.

According to Sombrio, the Barangay council passed an ordinance stating that the mangrove forest will be monitored every quarter and that the community will conduct rehabilitation and coastal clean-up regularly. They have included the ban on cutting mangrove trees, which they believe could protect them from future disasters and serves as the sanctuary of both aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.

“Pasalamat jud mi nga ningabot ang higayon nga naapil nasad mi sa CCAM karong 2020, dako jud siya nga tabang sa katawhan sa Barangay. Dili lang kun sa pinansyal nga aspeto pero nakatabang sad kini sa pagpalambo sa amoang bakhawan (We are very thankful that we were given a chance to implement CCAM in our barangay for 2020. It did not only help us financially but it also helped us preserve our mangrove forest),” Sombrio said.

Sombrio expresses his thankfulness to DSWD for supporting the advocacy of Barangay Sua. Since the imposed community quarantine due to Coronavirus Disease-2019, most of the livelihood in the barangay were greatly affected. But through RRP-CCAM, the



Beneficiaries in Barangay Sua, Barobo, Surigao del Sur rehabilitates their mangrove forest.

“

Pasalamat jud mi nga ningabot ang higayon nga naapil nasad mi sa RRP-CCAM karong tuiga, dako jud siya nga tabang sa katawhan sa Barangay.

Dili lang kun sa pinansyal nga aspeto pero nakatabang sad kini sa pagpalambo sa amoang bakhawan.”

PEDRO SOMBRIO

**Barangay Kagawad of Sua,
Barobo, Surigao del Sur**



affected families were given additional income augmentation. Aside from this, the beneficiaries were also thankful for another Mangrove Rehabilitation project that was implemented in their town.

As they say, it may have taken a decade and a town to change perspectives but it was worth the ride. Barangay Sua, do not only have a thick mangrove forest lying along their coastline but also a community that champions mangrove forest preservation.#

Manobo MCCT beneficiary capitalize on opportunities with life-learned skills



Opportunities comes to those who persevere and take chances. Though there are instances where opportunities are scarce for those who do not necessarily have the connections – the resources, hard work and a special set of skills have come in handy to open doors for better, life changing opportunities. This is what Meramie C. Bernales, a Manobo woman strongly believes in.

Meramie, a good and devoted wife to Edward, and a loving mother to her daughters Hazylee and Eumae, have been a hard-working farmer for quite some time. Having been a farmer, it was a blessing when they had the chance to be part of the Modified Conditional Cash Transfer for Indigenous Peoples (MCCT-IP) for the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) in 2014.

“Dako gyud og tabang sa pinansyal ang MCCT labi na kay dili igo ang among kita sa pag-uma. Ako usab parent leader sa among barangay og naningkamot ko nga makasunod sa tanan kondisyon sa program labi na kay kami pud ang madali-dali og tawag basta naay mga ipabuhat sa barangay (The financial grants of MCCT has helped us a lot since our income through farming is not enough. I am a parent leader too in our barangay and I work hard to comply with the conditions of the program especially that we are on-call when the barangay needs assistance),” Meramie shared.

When they were prioritized to avail of a 24-day Cash for Work project, she was motivated. The project required planting not less than 200 banana seedlings in their own vacant lands. But with her devotion and hard work, she was able to double it to 400 during the 24-days of the project.

Their labor was not in vain, as their bananas bore fruit and they earned from it. She became motivated and planted more. Now, they at least have 1,500 banana plants, and they earn around Php15,000.00 to Php 18,000 in a month. She also made use of her entrepreneurial skills, and her cooking skills by putting up a small vegetable store and carenderia.

“Nakasugod na mi og patukod og bag-o nga balay. Kadtong niabot ang pandemya, wala ra kaayo mi nabug-atan og maayo tungod sa among napundar nga ipon, dili pareha sauna nga dili pami membro sa MCCT-IP. (We are also building our new house. With all the opportunities and hard work, our family was not heavily affected of the pandemic crisis. Not like before we became beneficiaries of MCCT-IP),” she proudly shared.

Without a doubt, opportunities do come to those who work hard and grab chances which comes their way. But most of all, opportunities, coupled with some skills, do produce good outcomes. #

DSWD staff undergo Camp Coordination, Management Training

The Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office Caraga trained internal staff on Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) at Balanghais Hotel, Butuan City, last October 12-15.

The training was spearheaded by the Disaster Response Management Division (DRMD), in collaboration with the Capacity Building Unit (CBU) and the Learning and Development Section (LDS) of DSWD Caraga.

The four-day training, which also includes the topic on Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Protection, aims to provide the staff an understanding of the coordination mechanisms between and among members of the response clusters and its vital role on the protection and safety of IDPs and the provision of adequate services promptly. Discussions cover the standards in handling the preparation, actual, and post-camp management processes and develop potential or active camp managers with the appropriate camp management competencies for IDPs compliant to humanitarian standards and protocols.

Using the different teaching-learning methodologies, the training team tackled four modules, namely:

- Module 1. Introduction to Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM), Humanitarian Standards, and Internally Displaced Persons.
- Module 2. Camp Coordination and Camp Management
- Module 3. Information Management
- Module 4. Preparation for Early Recovery Phase

According to the Philippine Constitution (Article 2, Section 4), "the prime duty of the government is to serve and protect the people." Disasters are no exception to this law. It is always imperative to immediately move disaster-affected families to safe, secure, and accessible evacuation centers or safe areas to decrease the possible casualties during disasters. With this, DSWD ensures proper Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Protection during these times.

The CCCM cluster aims to provide timely and well-coordinated humanitarian assistance and augmentation support in the management of the evacuation center. It is to ensure that the needs of the disaster-affected families are attended to appropriately.

Aside from the proper implementation of CCCM in camps, disaster-affected individuals and families are also entitled to IDP protection, during their displacement and during return or resettlement and reintegration. Protection refers



DSWD Caraga staff educated on the laws and policies of children's protection in emergency situations during the first day of the CCCM and IDP protection training.



Teams undergo situational analysis on camp situations to expand their planning skills.



The trainees planned and created their own camp miniatures to visualize the planning strategies during one session on camp management.

to all the activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the individual's rights in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e., human rights law, humanitarian law, and refugee law).

With this, DSWD Caraga hopes to increase competent potential or active camp managers equipped with camp coordination & camp management, and IDP protection knowledge and skills.#

Bayabas Town: Champion on environmental preservation



Tree planting during the implementation of Sagip-Ilog/ Kawayanan Riverbank Stabilization in Barangay Cagbaoto, Bayabas, Surigao del Sur.



During payout beneficiaries give out live and ready-to-plant bamboo culms for their Kawayanihan Growing initiative.

As the world faces the COVID-19 pandemic, most communities are affected by it. As if the world stopped, community quarantines were imposed by different Local Government Units; people started to lose their jobs. Livelihood across the Philippines is greatly affected by the pandemic.

This problem is not foreign to the small town of Bayabas. According to Bayabas Municipal Mayor, Maria Clarita G. Limbaro, the municipality is currently facing a crisis due to COVID-19. Marginalized sectors have insufficient income for basic needs, and there is an increase of displaced workers in the town.

The Municipality of Bayabas is a 5th Class Municipality in the province of Surigao del Sur. It has a population of 9,130 based on the data from the Municipal Health and Sanitation Office in 2019. Most of the Barangays here are coastal communities which are highly susceptible to disasters such as flooding, storm surge, typhoon, monsoon rains, earthquakes, and landslides.

Soil erosion is one of the problems of the municipality. Soil erosion is the movement and transport of the soil's upper layer by different agents, particularly water, wind, and mass movement, causing its deterioration in the long term. The most effective way of minimizing erosion is to guarantee a permanent surface cover on the soil surface, such as trees, pasture, or meadow.

These problems were addressed through the projects implemented by DSWD's Risk Resiliency Program-Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (RRP-CCAM), where the seven Barangays of Bayabas became its recipients. All the projects and activities under the program were aligned with the existing plans of the Executive-Legislative Agenda (ELA), Municipal Development Plan (MPD), and the Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP). They were coined as *Sagip-Tubig*, *Sagip-ilog* and *Kawayanihan*, *Sagip-Wakatan*, and *Gulayan-Bayanihan*.

Through the Sagip-Tubig Project or Watershed Rehabilitation, the beneficiaries



RRP-CCAM Mangrove rehabilitation in Barangay Balete, Bayabas, Surigao del Norte

supported the development and rehabilitation of the watersheds identified as a potable water source. Sagip-ilog or riverbank stabilization thru Kawayanihan, on the other hand, is the planting of bamboo and other fruit-bearing trees along the riverbanks. This would help prevent soil erosion and flooding in the barangay.

The *Sagip-Wakatan* or Mangrove Reforestation helps prevent storm surge and serves as the spawning areas for the marine life to sustain the supply of aquamarine and fishery products. Lastly, the Gulayan-Bayanihan or community garden will help sustain the vegetable and root crops supply of the community. This initiative shall address the food security crisis amidst of the pandemic in the municipality.

With the help of RRP-CCAM, the community was further educated about Climate Change, its effects, and the things they could contribute to mitigate and adapt to it. The beneficiaries were able to showcase “Bayanihan” or community participation by adopting community-defined projects.

“Before we decided the activities to be conducted, we were able to involve everyone in the decision making. It was an edge to involve all the constituents for them to become an environmental steward and collaboratively participate in creating the future of their children,” Mayor Limbaro said.

The Local Government Unit of Bayabas, the Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs), the Municipal Social Welfare Officer, and potential beneficiaries sat down for a planning workshop to further analyze the needs of each barangay.

“Malipayon mi na daghan ang benepisyaryo sa CCAM, mas daghan ang atong na involve sa adbokasiya. Gawas nga nakatabang siya sa panginahanglan sa matag panimalay, makapaghat pa ni siya nga dili lang siya maghuna-huna ug unsay ilahang madawat kun dili unsa ilang mahatag para sa kinaiyahan (We are very glad that CCAM can accommodate a lot of potential beneficiaries. Aside from the financial assistance brought by the project, they would also think about the things they could do or offer to protect the environment),” Municipal Mayor Libaro added.

Before the implementation proper, potential beneficiaries had to attend an orientation about the project to establish a sense of ownership and responsibility for their newfound advocacy towards environmental preservation. It drove the beneficiaries to do more than they were required by helping each other and helping their community.

The various projects were turned over and accepted by the Sangguniang Kabataan Council, Barangay Council, and other existing organizations in their municipality, including women, fisherfolks, farmers, irrigators, and waterworks sanitation associations. They have committed to monitor the projects every month and allocate budget for its maintenance and sustainability.

Another means of sustainability mechanism in Bayabas is the exchanging of Bamboo culms during the payout. Each beneficiary committed and brought bamboo culms during the payout of their 10-day community work. This exceptional initiative was introduced by the LGU to gather at least 1,500 live and ready to plant bamboo culms for their Kawayanihan Growing as Riverbank Stabilization or Sagi-ilog initiative all over Bayabas. This project will help prevent soil erosion and flooding in the future.

“Dako nga tabang ang RRP-CCAM, dili lang kay natabangan ni sa amoang pang adlaw-adlaw nga panginahanglan, nakabalo pud mi unsaon pagpananom, ug ang pagpangandam sa mga muabot nga katalagman, ug sa pagpangalaga sa atong palibot. Natabangan sad mi sa amoang mga panginahanglanon sulod sa usa ka bulan, tungod sa benepisyo gikan sa CCAM (RRP-CCAM is a huge help to the beneficiaries and the community, we did not only given monetary assistance but we were also educated on the things to do during disasters, and how to take care of our environment. The financial assistance brought by CCAM was able to aid our one-month consumption),” Larry Pious Murillo, the SK Chairperson and beneficiary from Bayabas, Surigao del Sur, expressed his gratefulness to the program.

DSWD does not only implement projects for the community but also ensures an increase of awareness and understanding towards its advocacies. The Municipality of Bayabas is just one of the few LGUs where RRP-CCAM brought a great impact on the community, sustainability-wise, and on the advocacy.

Let us continue influencing others on environmental preservation, BIDA Change!



DSWD ASEC Rhea Peñaflor hailed the Municipality of Bayabas for its outstanding implementation of RRP-CCAM and its unique initiatives.

Batang 4Ps of Agusan Sur proud of Banwaon heritage

As her nimble feet moves with grace with the cadence to the bamboo sticks, 11-year old Christine Arche jives to the rhythm of the Pinikpikan music as she performs a well-timed tribal dance at her abode in *Barangay Maliwanag*.

A barangay in Esperanza, Agusan del Sur, Maliwanag is haven to the indigenous tribe recognized as one of the largest tribe in the Province, the Banwaon people. The name Banwaon is derived from the word banwa which means “home.”

Keeping up with the tradition

The *Pinikpikan* dance patronizes and promotes everything indigenously Filipino by showcasing cultural values of the IP tribe through graceful and fluid dance moves following the rhythmic and melodic sounds played from indigenous instruments.

Even in these modern times, the Banwaons have managed to keep their culture and traditions intact, such as the close-knit family ties, ceremonial offerings, and knowledge in farming and fishing. *“Ang Papa ko ay nagtatrabaho sa bukirin, nagtatanim ng netibong bigas, kamote, kamoteng-kahoy, iba’t-ibang gulay, at palkata. Ang Mama ko naman ay isang Barangay Day Care Worker, kaya tuwing Sabado lamang kami nakakasama kay Papa sa bukid* (My father works in the farm, plants native rice, root crops, vegetables, and falcate trees. My mother is a day care worker that’s why we can only go with my father every Saturday),” Christine narrated. With the meager income that her parents earn, they cannot afford to hire a babysitter, thus her mother had to carry her to school while teaching other children. She remembers feeling all the love and attention from her parents even when she was still three years old back then.

Christine grew up to be a responsible, talented, and intelligent kid. She was a consistent honor student from Grades 1-5, and is active in all extra-curricular activities in the school – she even is one of the most active members of Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP).

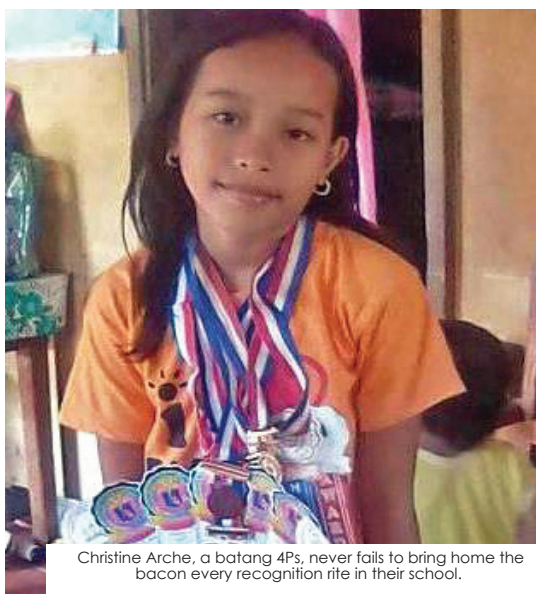
Pursuing education amidst financial shortage

“Buotan nga bata sa akong classroom, responsable, cooperative sa mga classmates labi na sa mga academic activities. Siya usa pud ka lider sa Kabataan Kontra Basura (KKB). Tanan nga aktibidad, maasahan gyud siya (She is very kind, responsible, and cooperative to her classmates especially in academic activities. She is a leader of the KKB too. She is responsible and is reliable in conducting activities),” Rowena Calo, her class adviser, shared.

Now that she is already in sixth grade, she reminds herself to study hard and chase her dreams, because she wants to help her parents in uplifting their living condition. Thankfully, they got a little lift through the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino



Robed in vibrant garments, Christine readies herself for her performance of the Pinikpikan tribal dance.



Christine Arche, a batang 4Ps, never fails to bring home the bacon every recognition rite in their school.

Program's (4Ps) sub-component, the Modified Conditional Cash Transfer for Indigenous Peoples (MCCT-IP).

Salient features of the MCCT include modification in terms of targeting, conditionalities, program interventions, and mode of implementation. Also, it aims to provide social protection services fit to the needs of IPs, according to the Memorandum Circular 19 series of 2014.

Her mother Dinah is all but praises to the program, saying, *"Dako ang among kalipay kay nakatabang kini sa pag-eskwela sa among duha ka anak. Nakita man gud nako nga naningkamot pud sila, maminaw kung patun-on ug masinabtanon sa kahintang namo* (We are elated because it really helped in the education of our two kids. I see that they are determined, they listen when I tell them to study, and understanding in our situation)."

Taking pride of her heritage

While pursuing her studies, Christine continues to cope with the different challenges, especially in the changes in their environment and community. This, being the case that their barangay has little access to basic services. But with the MCCT program, Christine, and her fellow Banwaons now are hopeful of a better future ahead.

"Ang MCCT ay nakapagbigay ng pag-asa sa mga batang mahirap na katulad ko na nangangarap na makatapos sa pag-aaral. Sa kabila ng lahat na aking nakamit at natutunan sa eskwelahan at sa komunidad, bilang batang 4Ps ang pinakamahalaga para sa akin ay ang pamilya at pagkakakilanlan. Ito ay maituturing ko na aking munting tagumpay (The MCCT gave hope for poor children like me who have dreams to finish school. In all that I have learned in school and in the community, as a 4Ps child, the most important for me is family and identity. This, I consider, is my little feat)," Christine shared.

With all the blessings going their family's way, and the new opportunities that Christine now enjoys, she thanks the Pantawid Pamilya Program for modifying its guidelines to fit the situation of the Indigenous Peoples through the MCCT-IP. She strongly believes that preserving their cultural identity as Banwaons is important especially during the "new normal" set-up. She believes that even in times of the advancements in technology, it is always necessary to look back, and take pride of one's heritage.

Christine believes that the fluid dance steps, the sound of loud and melodic brass gongs, and sophisticated, elegant garments and dresses, are legacies for the next generations of the Banwaon tribe in their remote community. But with the MCCT-IP modality, the 4Ps grantees are certain of a more hopeful heritage for tomorrow. #



Christine considers her family as the most important part and feat of her life.



Aside from being a leader of KKB, Christine is actively involved in the Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP) organization.

Strength and success in numbers: Solopreneur rises to top with livelihood association

Being an effective leader takes a lot of effort. Although it can be a tough job or function, it can also be one of the most rewarding roles one can have.

Vanessa Banguis, a 36-year old resident of Barangay Mabua in Surigao City, used to sell ready-to-wear (RTW) garments to support herself and her family's needs during her younger years. Regularly, her small livelihood would earn her an income of PHP 3,000 a month.

Vanessa never planned of becoming a leader of sorts. She has always seen herself as an independent worker. Though she can immediately adapt to groups, she prefers working solo because she thinks that she is not ready to take on immense responsibilities.

But in 2018, an opportunity came her way, which became a game-changer. Vanessa became one of the eligible program participants of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). On top of that, she was also elected as president of their SLP association, Mabua Silangan Sustainable Livelihood Program Association (SLPA).

Their group decided to establish a general merchandise store using the seed capital fund from the program amounting to PHP 450,000. Having an experience selling RTWs, Vanessa thought that she could manage that.

Yet, she was still having worries and was uncomfortable of the fact that she was handling a project that costs hundreds of thousands of pesos. Other than that, she had zero experience managing people being an independent worker for the past years.

"When the SLPA was just starting and I was elected as the SLPA president, I was worried since I was just a simple housewife and has no experience in managing a hundreds of thousands worth of project. From the processing



SLP Staff Lovely Libres (person on the L) conducts monitoring of project at the Mabua Silangan SLPA. She is assisted by SLPA President Vanessa Banguis.



Vanessa (3rd person from the L) and members of the Mabua Silangan SLPA celebrate their Hawaiian-themed anniversary together with SLP Provincial Coordinator for Surigao del Norte Jhunrey Betonio (3rd person from R).

of the legal documents, to the managing of the manpower, everything was new to me,” Vanessa narrated.

Despite her self-doubts, Vanessa did not let this marginalize her abilities. Instead, she faced these challenges for her to know herself better, to discover new skills, and to become a good and responsible leader.

She said, “I did not let my lack of experience and knowledge to hinder my role. I took the responsibilities and challenges because I believed what’s important is that you learn to love what you do and to have patience and faith for whatever trials you may encounter along the way.”

Slowly, Vanessa found her way to become a better leader. She learned to develop a positive attitude and design strategies that helped her manage the association and the project well.

Along the way, Vanessa also improved her self-confidence little by little. She realized that she has the capacity to handle a large group of people while consequently, monitoring the progress of their project.

Vanessa also emphasized that she has been excelling as a leader because she is also blessed with responsible, strong, and active SLPA officers.

“I am also grateful to have strong and responsible officers beside me. Without them, I won’t be able to make it this far,” Vanessa stressed.

Aside from ensuring the success of their general merchandise store and strengthening their organizational structure, Vanessa and the Mabua Silangan SLPA also deemed to be of great importance to become active in the

community and extend their services and efforts.

When the country went into full lockdown last April, Vanessa and the Mabua Silangan SLPA volunteered to help the community by distributing food to the front liners in the barangay and in Surigao City.

Other than that, the association also partnered with the Barangay Local Government Unit of Mabua to provide one sack of rice per household. Vanessa and her team also took the initiative to give out Php150.00 worth of groceries to their SLPA members.

All of these initiatives have been made possible because of the leadership of Vanessa. With Vanessa’s influence to the Mabua Silangan SLPA, her members became motivated to deliver passionate and dedicated service to the people. The pandemic has led them to the realization that with the opportunities coming their way, they also have important roles to fulfil in their community.

Era Saguban, one of the members of the Mabua Silangan SLPA, supported this fact as she witnessed how the excellent leadership of Vanessa has helped them in many ways.

“Ako isip usa ka myembro sa association, ako nakita nga usa siya kamaayo nga lider kay wala siya maglantaw alang lamang sa iyang kaugalingon, kun dili alang sa kaayuhan sa mga myembro ug sa mga lumulupyo sa barangay. Dili lamang iyang opinion an matuman kay mukuha pud siya og opinion sa uban member (As a member of the association, I witnessed how good of a leader she is because she considers not just herself, but as well the welfare of other

members and residents of the barangay. She does not just listens and contemplates her own opinions, but she also gathers the opinion of others),” Saguban gleefully said.

For 2021, Vanessa and her co-members plan to expand their livelihood and establish a micro-lending project. They are eyeing to start this as early as January 2021, as they have already managed to deposit a substantial amount of their income in the bank for the said endeavor.

“Now, we may still have a long way to go, but we can say we’re already victorious,”

Vanessa said, with a huge smile.

Just when Vanessa thought that she was only meant to work alone, the universe opened an opportunity for her to lead a group of women with one goal. Although she figured it out a little late, Vanessa realized that she has the calling to lead others. More than anything else, she aspires to become a better leader so that she can set a good example to the people around her.

With the tangible and notable results of her actions, Vanessa has definitely made a significant impact to her community. Being a leader may require a lot of effort. But when you have the drive for it, it just comes naturally.

Take for example, Vanessa.#

DSWD-Caraga starts receiving Listahanan grievances in AgNor



OIC-PPD Chief/ NHTS Head Aldie Mae A. Andoy provides technical assistance to AS and ensure compliance of health protocol in receiving grievances per barangay in Agusan del Norte.



The Grievance Corner for Listahanan 3 initial list of poor households in Barangay Bobon, Butuan City has started receiving grievances.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office Caraga has started receiving grievances relative to the Listahanan initial list of poor households.

The said list is the result of the 3rd round household assessment conducted by the Department through the National Household Targeting Section (NHTS) or Listahanan last year.

The initial list bares the household head's name, sex, sitio/purok/street address who were identified as poor after the application of the Proxy Means Test (PMT)- a statistical model used to predict the per capita income of a household based on observable characteristics that correlate with, but are easier to measure than income.

Officer-In-Charge Ramel F. Jamen advised the community to check first the initial list of poor households posted at the barangay hall before going to the Area Supervisor to file a grievance. This way, we can maximize more of our time and we can check what kind of grievances that can be filed," Jamen said.

"I advise the community to check the initial list of poor households posted at the barangay hall before going to the Area Supervisor to file a grievance. This way, we can maximize more of our time and we can check what kind of grievances that can be filed," Jamen said.

For Listahanan 3, the types of grievances that may be filed during the Validation and Finalization Phase are as follows:

1. Exclusion Grievance Type 1 (EX01). A specific household is poor and must be included in the list of poor households.

2. Exclusion Grievance Type 2 (EX02). A specific household is poor but is not interviewed during the data collection period.

3. Inclusion Grievance Type 1 (INC01). A household in the initial list of poor households is wrongly classified (supposed to be non-poor).

4. Inclusion Grievance Type 2 (INC02). A poor household claims to have been erroneously classified and wants to be removed from the list.

5. Error Grievance Type 1 (ER01). A household in the initial list of poor has incorrect information in the database (i.e. name, sex, and street address).

6. Error Grievance Type 3 (ER03). A household in the initial list of poor has incorrect information in the database (i.e. barangay address, date of birth. Marital status, and addition/deletion of roster members.)

7. Transfer (of residence) Grievance 1 (TR01). A household in the initial list of poor has transferred residence. This also includes those who were previously interviewed in evacuation centers and temporary shelters but have moved to their permanent residence.

Jamen also encourages the community to take advantage of the Listahanan Validation and Finalization Phase as this activity will only take a month. The receiving and resolving of grievances through community and online is guided by the timeline set by the DSWD Central Office.

"I also encourage our fellow Caraganons to get involved during this time. If there are misspelled names and wrong information, if there are poor households who were not included on the list, or households found on the list but not qualified, this is the time to complain. Once the period for receiving of complaints have lapsed, the Department will no longer entertain grievances from the community", he added.

During this phase, the Area Supervisors will act on grievances from the households in his/her assigned barangays by correctly classifying the grievances and determining eligibility of the complainant. He/she will then consolidate grievances and endorse to the Barangay Verification Team (BVT) for review and evaluation. After which, the list of grievances with recommendations will be forwarded to the Local Verification Committee (LVC).

With this, the complainants are advised to bring valid ID such as SSS ID, GSIS ID, Philhealth ID, Driver's License, Voter's ID, PRC ID, Senior Citizen ID, OFW, ID, Passport Seafarer's Record Book, Birth Certificate, and Barangay ID as proof of identification during filing of complaints, wear face mask, and maintain social distancing to avoid possible spread of COVID-19.

As of now, Agusan del Norte and Butuan City have started receiving grievances from the community, while Area Supervisors assigned in Surigao del Sur and Agusan del Sur have started conducting orientations and posting of the initial list of poor households, after which, the receiving of complaints will follow.

On the other hand, Surigao del Norte and the Province of Dinagat Islands, will still be conducting the 3-day trainings for Area Supervisors. The delay of the conduct of the activity is due to the existing policy of the LGUs that prohibit the conduct of trainings, mass gatherings and the like. As of this writing, the Department is in close coordination with the LGUs for the continuation of Listahanan 3 activities.

Listahanan is an information management system that identifies who and where the poor are in the country. #

About 4,000 residents of Tagana-an town in Surigao del Norte province have benefitted from the cash-for-work scheme under the Disaster Response Operation Procedure (DROP) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Kalahi-CIDSS program.

Most of the barangays in Tagana-an have already completed cash-for-work, which started in September. Only Barangays Azucena, Banban and Talavera have yet to complete the project.

Cash-for-work is a short-term intervention to provide temporary employment to distressed/ displaced individuals by participating in or undertaking preparedness, mitigation, relief, rehabilitation or risk reduction projects and activities in their communities or in evacuation centers.

Residents are temporarily employed to clean and sanitize public places and offices, communal livestock and/or vegetable/fruit gardening/farming, repacking of goods, clearing of vital roads, among others.

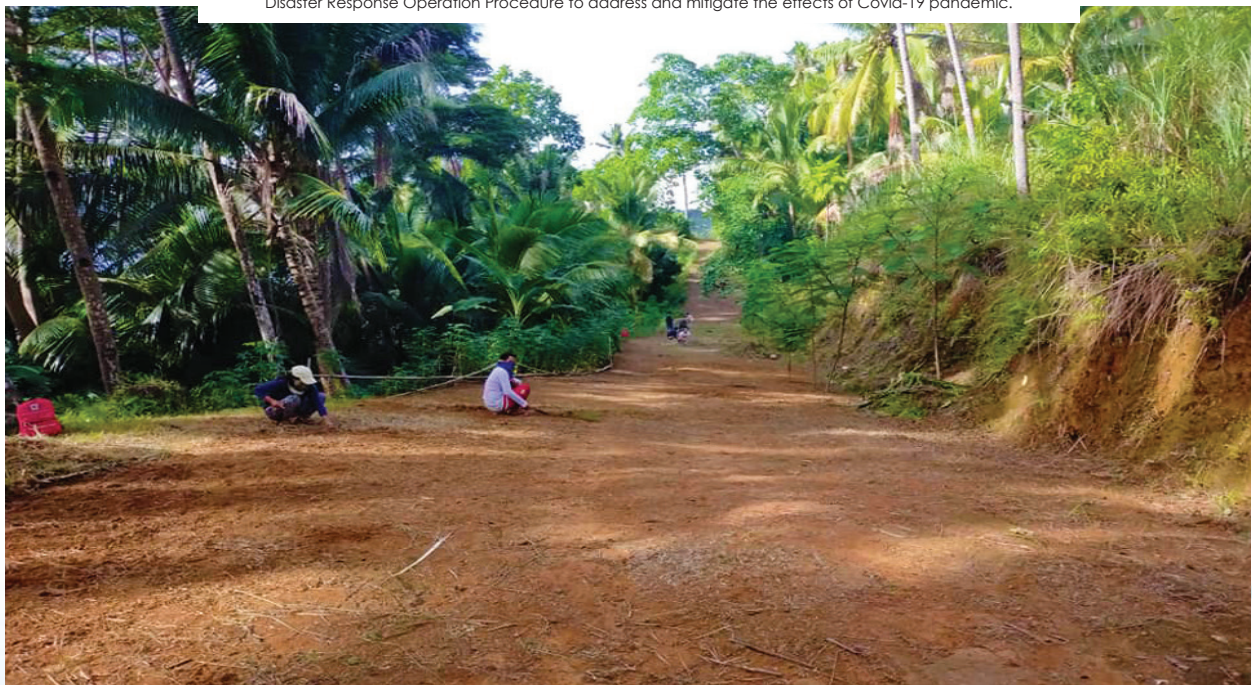
In exchange for the work rendered, program recipients are provided with cash to meet their requirement for food and other basic necessities. Cash-for-Work may be undertaken before, during or after the occurrence of any disaster whether natural or man-made, such as this Covid-19 pandemic.

Cash-for-Work is one of the subprojects eligible for funding under DROP, which allows DSWD's Kalahi-CIDSS-covered areas to shift its operations from regular developmental activities into a disaster response modality to immediately address issues related to early recovery.

Kalahi-CIDSS or Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan - Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services is one of the poverty alleviation programs of the government being implemented by DSWD.



These residents of Tagana-an, Surigao del Norte are temporarily employed to clear roads as part of the cash-for-work project under DSWD's Kalahi-CIDSS program. Cash-for-Work is one of the subprojects eligible for funding under Disaster Response Operation Procedure to address and mitigate the effects of Covid-19 pandemic.



Other eligible subprojects under DROP include installation of temporary quarantine facility; procurement of DOH-approved medical tools, equipment, or personal protection equipment; and retrofitting or refurbishing of identified public buildings like evacuation centers, barangay halls, school buildings, tribal halls, and multi-purpose centers.#



26th Elderly Filipino Week Celebration: DSWD FO Caraga extends aid to PDLs



As part of the 26th Elderly Filipino Week Celebration, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office Caraga, through the Regional Inter-Agency Committee on Senior Citizens, distributed hygiene kits and other goods among Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL), particularly the senior citizens from various jails in the region last November 5, 2020.

The Elderly Filipino Week celebration is an annual celebration in the Philippines observed every first week of October in accordance with Proclamation No. 470 signed by the former President Fidel V. Ramos. This year's celebration banners the theme "Healthy and Productive Aging Starts With ME," which seeks to promote the health, wellness, and productivity of senior citizens, particularly during the pandemic.

Bearing this, to further strengthen the Department's efforts to ensure the rights and welfare of senior citizens, particularly their access to basic health, are respected, protected and promoted, DSWD together with partner agencies, extended the celebration of the Elderly Week by giving a total of 96 hygiene kits. The following are the Caraga jails that DSWD, together with the partner agency, have visited: Cabadbaran, SDN District Jail, Dapa SDN, Bislig Annex, Cantilan District Jail, Lianga SDS, Butuan Male Dorm, Butuan Female Dorm, Surigao City Jail, and Bislig City.



4Ps benes in SurSur maximize spaces for backyard gardening to appease food needs



Tessie Cuadra, a Pantawid beneficiary of San Miguel, Surigao del Sur.



Wivena Laurente, a Pantawid beneficiary of Tago, Surigao del Sur.



Lally Quezada, a Pantawid beneficiary of Cortes, Surigao del Sur.

In response to the pandemic crisis, the National Advisory Committee (NAC) of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program came up with the idea to put on hold the compliance of the conditions starting February to September 2020 through the National Advisory Committee Resolution # 1.

This implied that the rice subsidy, education and health grants were provided to all household beneficiaries fully even in the absence of physical Family Development Sessions (FDS), school/medical facility visits, and garden spot-check or monitoring. However, 4Ps beneficiaries of Surigao del Sur continue to toil and grow their own vegetable gardens.

First, a Manobo grantee in San Miguel, Surigao del Sur, despite being pregnant, made sure to spare her time by taking good care of her garden. Tessie Cuadra, and her husband Christopher, are farmers. But because of the pandemic, they could barely sustain their family's needs. However, she was able to provide nutritious meals for them by continuing to plant amid the pandemic.

"Sa among nataran, naay okra, sibujing, kalabasa, malunggay, tanglad, ug uban pa. Bisan sa kalisod, nakapangita gihapon kami og pamaagi nga makakaon og naay sustansya. (In our garden, we have okra, spring onions, squash, moringa, lemon grass, among others. Even with hardship, we still found a way to eat food with nutrients)," Tessie proudly shared.

Another family who made efforts to continue their regular gardening during the pandemic was the Laurente family. Though the COVID-19 outbreak happened, it gave Wivena Laurente and her family an opportunity to enjoy each other's company through family bonding, and backyard gardening in Tago, Surigao del Sur.

Their garden has Malabar spinach, tomatos, sweet potatoes, string beans, eggplants, lady's fingers, ampalaya, sponge gourd, and malunggay. They also have spices like lemon grass, onion, and bell pepper. The backyard garden is a great help to them especially when the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) was implemented, because nutritious foods are available nearby.

"Nakahatag pud sa amo og dugang halin kay ibaligya man namo ang uban (The garden provided us extra source of income because we sell some of it too)," Wivena exclaimed.

Lastly, Lally Quezada is one of the affected beneficiary in Cortes. She disclosed that during this pandemic their economic situation has been so tough. Luckily, she found an empty space near their house.

"Yakita nako na may bakante duol sa amo municipal gym, amo yadto tagtamnang namo nan ako bana nan mga gulay para may panud-an kami (I found a vacant lot near our municipal gymnasium, so I and my husband decided to plant vegetables on it for us to have viand)," she recalled.

She utilized the space to plant malunggay, ampalaya, okra, Chinese spinach, squash, and other leafy vegetables. She already harvested from her mini garden and shared her harvest with some of their neighbors.

More than their need for food, this pandemic also taught the Pantawid beneficiaries how to be creative, resourceful, and be optimistic in all the negativities encountered. According to them, they will continue to maximize their space for a backyard garden because they realized its importance and benefit to their health. #

Mamanwas in Kitcharao get own toilets from Kalahi-CIDSS PAMANA



Mamanwa tribal leader Mabalaw Edwin Biog (left) receive the key of responsibility from Barangay Poblacion chairperson Marwayne Napalan (2nd from L) during the inauguration and turnover ceremony of 31 individual household latrines in Barangay Poblacion, Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte.



Representatives of DSWD Kalahi-CIDSS program, NCIP, local government unit of Kitcharao, and local government unit of Barangay Poblacion pose outside one of the 31 individual household latrines built for the Mamanwa community in the said village.

Mamanwa tribe members in Barangay Poblacion, Kitcharao town in Agusan del Norte no longer need to go to the great outdoors to relieve themselves.

This after the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Kalahi-CIDSS program turned over 31 individual household latrines to the said indigenous community on Friday, November 13, 2020.

The construction of individual latrines in Sitio Bliss, which costs P2.2 million, is under the Disaster Response Operation Procedure (DROP) of the Kalahi-CIDSS PAMANA IP CDD (PAYapa at MASaganang PamayaNAn Indigenous Peoples Community-Driven Development) implementation.

According to the United Nations, everyone must have sustainable sanitation, alongside clean water and handwashing facilities, to help protect and maintain health security and stop the spread of deadly infectious diseases such as COVID-19, cholera, and typhoid.

Poblacion Barangay Chairperson Marwayne Napalan said the project is the answer to the hygiene and sanitation problem in Sitio Bliss.

He said the road to being healthy starts with a clean toilet, adding that the installation of toilets will significantly reduce the occurrence of diseases and the community now enjoy a cleaner and healthier environment.

Tribal leader Mabalaw Edwin Biog said they are very much thankful to the project, saying that the Mamanwas should use these toilets and not return to their old ways.

Biog said the toilets will definitely raise the standard of living of the Mamanwas. Kalahi-CIDSS Regional Infrastructure Officer Engr. Potamio Valdehueza hopes that the beneficiaries will take care of the project for the next generation.

"Nanghinaut mi nga inyong tipigan kining mga latrine nga gibuhat para kaninyo arun mapuslan pa kini sa mga sunod nga mga henerasyon"

(We hope that you will take good care of these latrines we made for you so that the future generation will still benefit from it)," Valdehueza said.

DROP allows DSWD's Kalahi-CIDSS-covered areas to shift its operations from regular developmental activities into a disaster response modality to immediately address health issues.

PAMANA, under the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), is the government's framework for peace and development. It is implemented in conflict-affected communities, as well as in areas covered by existing peace agreements.

Kalahi-CIDSS (Kapit-Bisig Laban sa kahirapan – Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services) falls under the second strategic pillar of the PAMANA framework, which is building resilient communities. The project objective is to improve the access of Kalahi-CIDSS areas classified as conflict-affected barangays (CABs) to basic social services and responsive, transparent, and accountable local governments.#



Bayugan, AgSur Former rebels enjoy livelihood aid from DSWD

In its relentless pursuit to attain an inclusive, sustainable peace in the country and to provide communities in conflicted-afflicted areas a chance to have improved living conditions, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office Caraga, through the Sustainable Livelihood Program, turned over a one-unit general merchandise store project to the One Stand Association (OSA) in Barangay Noli, Bayugan City.

OSA, organized on July 14, 2020, is an SLP association composed of 20 former rebels hailing from various barangays in Bayugan City, namely: San Juan, Katipunan, Pinagalaan, Mount Olive, Mount Carmel, and Osmeña.

The general merchandise store, amounting to PHP300,000, is the DSWD-SLP's intervention to help the former rebels and their respective families to have a stable source of income as they start their new lives.

The store is situated at the Home Defense Village located at P6, Barangay Noli – a community established by the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict of the Philippine Government which serves as the new home to former rebels and their families. In this community, former rebels will be involved in different activities that will support them improve their socio wellbeing.

On top of that, they will also be imparted with livelihood and economic opportunities to help them become self-sufficient.

During the turnover, the Association President expressed his gratitude to the Philippine National Government,

particularly to the DSWD-SLP and the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Bayugan City for giving them access to such livelihood opportunity.

"Uban sa akong mga kaubanan nga former rebels, dako gyud kaayo among pasalamat sa gobyerno ug sa lokal nga gamhanan sa Bayugan City ug labi na sa ahensya sa DSWD-SLP kay wala nila kami gibliyaan ug gitabangan nila kami sa pagsugod sa bag-o namong kinabuhi isip sa pagbalik sa sabakan sa gobyerno (In behalf of other former rebels, we would like to extend our huge gratitude to the government especially to the LGU Bayugan City and DSWD-SLP for not leaving us behind and helping us restart our lives as we return to the fold of the law)," he remarked.

The activity was graced by ABC President Merla Ajan and City Social Welfare and Development Livelihood Focal Eric Cale.

The provision of livelihood assistance is under the Community Resilience Program of the DSWD Administrative No. 14, series of 2019 – the guidelines of the Agency in the implementation of Executive Order No. 70, series of 2018. The EO 70, series of 2018 seeks to institutionalize the Whole-of-Nation approach in attaining peace and ending local communist conflicts in the country.#

DSWD, RIACAT-VAWC amplify 18-Day Campaign with Women's HoWR, MOVE campaign



DSWD FO Caraga's Orange wall – in support for the 18-Day VAW-FREE campaign.



Atty. Jerefe D. Tubigon-Bacang, Regional Director of the Commission on Human Rights, delivers her State of the Women's Address/Regional Report about the Situation of Women in Caraga Region.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office Caraga as Chair of the Regional Inter-Agency Committee against Trafficking and Violence Against Women and their Children (RIACAT-VAWC), kicked-off the 18-Day Campaign to End VAW by highlighting advocacies on HoWR (Honoring Women Rights) and the Men Opposed to VAW Everywhere (MOVE).

The HoWR campaign, which was launched on November 25, 2020, at the Conference Hall of DSWD FO Caraga, R.Palma St., Butuan City was among the opening activities of the said celebration, while the MOVE initiative was launched the following day, November 26, 2020 during the Tree Planting/Growing Activity of the Field Office in Abilan, Buenavista, ADN.

The 18-Day Campaign to End VAW supports the Philippine government's goal of protecting the human rights of women and girls by upholding its commitment to address all forms of gender-based violence as enshrined in the 1987 Constitution. By virtue of Republic Act 10398 or the

Act declaring November 25 of every year as the National Consciousness Day for the Elimination of VAWC, government agencies are mandated to raise awareness on the problem of violence and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls.

This year's campaign highlights the recurring theme "VAW-FREE community starts with Me" which reiterates everyone's commitment and contributions on ending VAW as well as to encourage the general public to make a personal commitment in ending Violence Against Women and Children.

During the opening activity, Atty. Jerefe D. Tubigon-Bacang, Regional Director of the Commission on Human Rights, and chairperson of the Regional Gender and Development Committee (RGDAC) Caraga, delivered her State of the Women's Address Regional Report about the Situation of Women in Caraga Region.

"As we flatten the COVID-19 curve, let us also flatten the Gender-based violence (GBV). Let us do more, let us make a louder, [and] wider campaign as we echo this year's campaign VAW-Free Community starts with Me" Atty. Bacang uttered.

Aside from the DSWD, several agencies also reserved a special corner of their respective offices and decorated it with the orange color as their support to the 18-Day VAW-Free Campaign. To wit: Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Health (DOH), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Philippine National Police (PNP), and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) took part in the campaign.

The Women's HoWR campaign was launched

around 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon (dubbed Women's Hour), when everybody was encouraged to change their profile picture using the official Facebook frame of Caraga's 18-Day Campaign to End VAW celebration. Several activities, such as contests, were also prepared by the RIACAT-VAWC to further strengthen the campaign. These were the VAW Photo story and Songwriting Competition. VAW Hotlines and Free Online Consultation were also re-launched during the Kick-off celebration.

On the following day, to build more momentum of the celebration, the Men Opposed to VAW Everywhere (MOVE) was launched during the Tree Growing Activity of DSWD FO Caraga, together with DENR – CENTRO Nasipit, MENRO Buenavista, and BLGU Abilan, Buenavista.

Considering that one of the key objectives of MOVE is to institutionalize and to support the national quest for a VAW-free Philippines, all the male staff from the Field Office formed a female symbol to show their partnership with women in ending VAW.

DSWD FO Caraga, together with RIACAT-VAWC encourages everyone to participate in the nation-wide 18-Day VAW-Free Campaign which runs from November 25 – December 13, 2020.#



MOVE strengthens their support to the national quest for a VAW-free Philippines by forming a female symbol during the conduct of the Tree Planting Growing Activity.



Men Opposed to VAW Everywhere (MOVE) amplifies their support to the 18-Day VAW-FREE Campaign by using the Orange Mask showing the #EndVAWNow campaign during the Tree Planting/Growing Activity.



Finding new hope: foundling enjoys benefits of foster care

The Philippines' ever-growing social and economic problems are considered the major causes of the rising number of abandoned Filipino children. According to UNICEF, almost 10,000 children become orphan every day. Given the fact that there are other out of sight conditions resulting to some shortfalls in calculating the accurate statistics of abandoned children, leads to a serious implication that there are actually more orphans that are unreported.

With the ever-growing population in the country, the increasing number of abandoned children or children in need of special protection, only means there is a need for more foster parents. This concern worsened when the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic hit the country, panning out a total of 547 COVID-19 active cases as of November 3, 2020 in Caraga. In this time of pandemic, children are considered as the most vulnerable and fragile members of the society.

This signals the seriousness of Foster Care towards abandoned and neglected children.

Thankfully, there are people who are tenderhearted and are willing to shower alternative parental care and love to abandoned children. Mr. Reuel C. Belza and Mrs. Concepcion G. Belza are a couple from Butuan City who chose to become foster parents. Mr. Belza serves as the Deputy Chief of Police at Bislig City, while Mrs. Belza is a professor at the Philippine Normal University-Mindanao.

A Newborn on a Rainy Night

It was around 7:00 o'clock on a rainy evening on the 4th of July 2020, when Johnny Aquino, a security guard in Juen Building, San Francisco, Agusan del Sur, heard a crying baby. He looked around the building and found a white plastic cellophane. As he looked closer, he realized that there was a newborn baby. He immediately called the owner of the building and called for rescue. Soon after, the Search and Rescue Agusan del Sur (SARAS) of San Francisco, ADS came and brought the child to D.O Plaza Memorial Hospital, in Patin-ay, Posperidad.

With the Assistance of the Local Government Unit

(LGU) of San Francisco, ADS, the newborn was placed to a licensed foster family through the social workers of the Adoption Resource and Referral Unit (ARRU) at the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office Caraga. The licensed foster family, Mr. and Mrs. Belza have been developed a year ago and undergone the necessary qualifications.

Every Child deserves a family

The newborn was given a crack at a better life through the opportunities brought about by the Adoption Resource and Referral Unit (ARRU) of the DSWD. The Agency believes that "EVERY CHILD DESERVES A FAMILY," thus, constantly encourages more couples and individuals to become foster parents in the region. With this, DSWD holds monthly adoption forum, every last Friday of the month intended to interested couples or even solo parents who are considering legal adoption process. The forum also amplifies Alternative Family Care Program which also serves as an encouragement for married



Mrs. Concepcion G. Belza (left) finally holds the baby right after one of DSWD's staff hands her the baby from an hour travel from Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur.



The Newborn sleeps soundly on his foster parent's arm.

or solo parents who are considering to become Foster Parents.

Foster care is a full-time ancillary care of children outside their own home by people other than their biological, adoptive or legal guardians. A child may be placed in foster care with their parents' consent. However, in some clear cases, such as cases of abuse or neglect, a court can order a child into a foster care without the parents' or guardians' consent. Foster care does not necessarily mean that it is a care given by a stranger. With consideration of several factors, when the government agency decides a child must be removed from their home, the child may be placed with relatives or licensed foster parents.

Accordingly, foster placements may last for weeks, months, or years, depending on the child's case. If the parents give up their rights permanently, or the court severs the rights to their child, the foster family may adopt the foster child or the child may be placed either through domestic or inter-country adoption.

With the earnest desire to address the lack of foster parents in Caraga even in this time of pandemic, DSWD FO Caraga, embodies alternative procedures to carry on with the monthly Adoption Forum. To enable connection over shared experiences even in this time of crisis, the agency opted on conducting an online adoption forum, using Google Meet or Zoom, to partner Local Government Units (LGUs) and to other interested individuals.

By this, social media cards are posted every month on the official Facebook page of the Adoption Resource and Referral Unit, Caraga region. These social media cards incorporate online links for easy access of the targeted audience. Other than discussing the entirety of the program, the agency also constantly provides discussion on several support care services such as counseling, training on child care and development, respite care, and skills training.

Additionally, to meet the child's behavioral and emotional needs, a monthly Foster Care Matching Conference is administered,

participated by invited lawyers, pediatricians, NGO representatives, LGU Social Workers, ARRU Social Workers, as well as Community-based Social Workers. Not only does the conference cater close to accurate child placement towards a foster parent, the conference also explores other options in the best interest of the child.

Every child deserves a safe, secure and stable environment. They also need full-time attention, warmth of a family setting, and personal care in a normal and wholesome family. Bearing this belief, DSWD encourages everyone to be a part of the global community that prevents child abandonment. If you found it in your hearts the interest in giving every child a family that can give them the unconditional love they deserve, you may contact the Adoption Resource and Referral Section of DSWD FO Caraga at (085) 342-5619 / 342-5620 or you may visit the Local Social Development Offices near you.#

DSWD Home for Girls celebrate 23rd Founding Anniversary



Rev. Fr. Antonio A. Saniel, and Fr. Cryslyr Kenny J. Gildo from Birhen sa Kasilak Parish, leads the celebration of the Holy Eucharist as well as the Blessing of CRCF Projects.



The HFG residents perform their originally composed song titled "Isang Batang Tulad Ko" to all guests.



Assistant Regional Director for Administration, Ramil M. Taculod expresses his gratitude to all staff for their commitment, enthusiasm and determination to make a difference to the lives of the young girls of HFG Caraga.

“This year’s anniversary falls in the middle of a global pandemic which makes our founding mission as more critical than ever. Today’s celebration does not only let us reflect on what we had accomplished for the past years, but it also allows us to remember the people and events that led us to where we are now”.

These was the message of Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office Caraga , OIC Regional Director Ramel F. Jamen, duly represented by Assistant Regional Director for Administration, Ramil M. Taculod, as he shared the message to the guests and residents during the 23rd Founding Anniversary of the Home for Girls (HFG) Caraga on November 24, 2020.

Ever since its establishment on November 11, 1997, the Home for Girls Caraga has been providing continuous services through its social workers, resident psychologists, manpower development affairs, house parents, and resident doctors.

The HFG Caraga is one of the residential care facilities of DSWD FO Caraga which caters the needs of young girls form seven (7) to 18 years old who were either sexually, psychologically and/or physically abused by their immediate family members or neighbors. It also serves as a home to victims of child labor, child trafficking, and children in conflict with the law, that were referred by the local Police. The center also

provides comprehensive programs to address self-improvement and rehabilitation with the means of psychotherapy through formal and non-formal education like arts, music, as well as spiritual activities for the residents.

The celebration banners the theme “Sustaining Excellence in Service Delivery Amid Pandemic”, which also calls for every duty bearer’s cooperation in performing their roles in the optimum way they can amid the pandemic. Part of the celebration is a call to every staff of the HFG Caraga to extend their commitment towards providing the most appropriate and comprehensive assistance to all the young girls and their families residing in the parameter.

One of the highlights of the celebration was the blessing of the newly completed Centers and Residential Care Facilities (CRCF) infrastructure projects in the said facility. With the expansion and improvements in the facility, the HFG will surely be able to cater to the needs of its clients.

To cap the celebration, the residents presented a heartwarming spoken poetry and a song titled “Isang Batang Tulad Ko” as an appreciation to the staff and workers of the DSWD FO Caraga, most especially to the HFG workers.#

More than 24k households set for Listahanan Validation in AgNor

More than 24-thousand households in Agusan del Norte is targeted for the re/assessment of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office Caraga through the National Household Targeting Section (NHTS) relative to the ongoing Listahanan Validation this year.

These households filed their official complaints and were collected by the Listahanan Area Supervisors during the allotted period for the receiving of grievances in their respective barangay halls. Some also filed their grievances through online by visiting <https://listahanan.dswd.gov.ph/grievance/>.

The subject for assessment/re-assessment are those approved grievances by the Barangay Verification Team (BVT) and Local Verification Committee (LVC) after thorough deliberation together with the Listahanan Area Supervisors. These includes grievances related to (a) a specific household not on the list of poor households, but wants to be included on the list (EX01), (b) a household in the initial list of poor households but is wrongly classified (INC01), and (c) a household in the initial list of poor has that has transferred residence (TR01) – this also includes those who were previously interviewed in the evacuation centers and temporary shelters but have moved to their permanent residences.

For those households who were not interviewed during the regular assessment and has requested for assessment, the Field Office be conducting



The enumerators conduct the interview with the respondent while ensuring compliance with the health protocols.

a special assessment/interview this year. DSWD will be coordinating with the LGUs for the schedule.

For the assessment/re-assessment, assigned enumerators will visit the respondent's house and conduct the interview following the health/safety protocols. But this doesn't limit the enumerator to observe the indicators reflected in the Household Assessment Form (HAF). After which, the respondent will affix her/his signature on the form and the enumerator will post a blue sticker as proof of assessment.

On the other hand, Surigao del Sur and Agusan del Sur cluster were done receiving grievances from the community and are preparing for the re-assessment/assessment activities. Surigao del Norte



and Province of Dinagat Islands on the other hand, will start receiving complaints based on the initial list of poor households posted at the barangay level.

The receiving of grievances and conduct of household assessment are part of the Validation Activities of Listahanan which aims to facilitate the identification of wrong entries in the household records and inclusion of households not assessed during the Data Collection Phase. This is a critical phase since this will ensure that the database for the 3rd round household assessment (final list of poor households) is accurate. #

Pantawid Pamilya awards winners for modified searches

It has been nine (9) months since the COVID-19 Pandemic erupted, and since, most activities of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) were put to a halt, postponed, or cancelled. This includes the annual conduct of national searches such as the Huwarang Pantawid Pamilya, and the Pantawid Exemplary Child.

However, the National Program Management Office - Social Marketing Division (NPMO-SMD) issued a memorandum to modify the searches fit for this new scheme – thus the implementation of the Salaysay ng Buhay ng Pamilyang Pantawid, and Likha ng Bata para sa Bata was held.

These modified searches promote the use of audio-visual materials and online platforms in showcasing the 4Ps beneficiaries' voice towards the promotion and advocacy for the Program. The Salaysay ng Buhay aims to paint a picture of the family's experience (struggles) as a household living under poverty, and how they slowly overcame those with the aid of the program.

Rodas family of RTR, Agusan del Norte bagged first place of the said search, followed by Jamorol family of Placer, Surigao del Norte, and Salas family of Tagbina, Surigao del Sur. The families were given cash prizes, and received a plaque of recognition from the NPMO.

To further recognize the efforts of the beneficiaries,



some of the Provincial Operations Offices (POOs) led by 4Ps Provincial Links (PL), initiated their own virtual and mobile awarding. The certificates and goods were personally received by the beneficiaries.

"The activity simply exemplified that no pandemic can hinder the efforts of our beneficiaries despite the health crisis the world is facing. With this activity, their efforts were given due credit," Ruth Tambura, PL of Agusan del Norte, said.

On the other hand, with the recently concluded National Children's Month, the *Likha*



ng Bata Para sa Bata - Wave 2, aims to showcase the different and unique talents of child-beneficiaries. The second wave circles on the theme related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The POO of Surigao del Sur conducted a virtual awarding for the child beneficiaries. They also extended their gratitude to the Provincial Government and field staff of C/MOOs, for the cooperation and full support that made the virtual activity a success.

The NPMO-SMD proposes to retain the modified searches until 2021 due to the uncertainty of the pandemic may bring. #

Caraga SWD Learning Network conduct Research, Evaluation Forum through CAMustahan



Amidst the threats and the challenges faced by the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the members of Social Welfare and Development – Learning Network (SWD L-Net) still took the time to meet and discuss important matters that would ensure the furtherance of the the advocacies of the network, especially in the promotion of social welfare and protection.

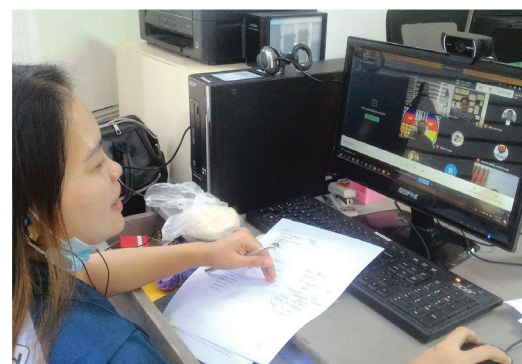
To do this, the SWD-LNet, led by the network's secretariat team from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office Caraga, through the Capacity Building Section, conducted a "CAMustahan" session, on November 19-20, 2020, together with the partners/members of the Learning-Network.

The activity, which was conducted through Google Meet (online platform), was simply a fun avenue for the Caraga SWD L-Net members to share their unique experiences in delivering social welfare and development services amid this time of heightened crisis and stress.

The activity, which was attended by SWD L-Net members from the Local Government Units (through the Local Social Welfare and Development Office), the Academe, Civil Society Organizations, Regional Line Agencies, and from the DSWD, tries to ensure that even with



Gelmar Faith Montillado (in blue polo shirt) and Steffan Skye Reyes, (co-facilitators) Training Officers from the Capacity Building Section, led the interactive discussions during the CAMustahan.



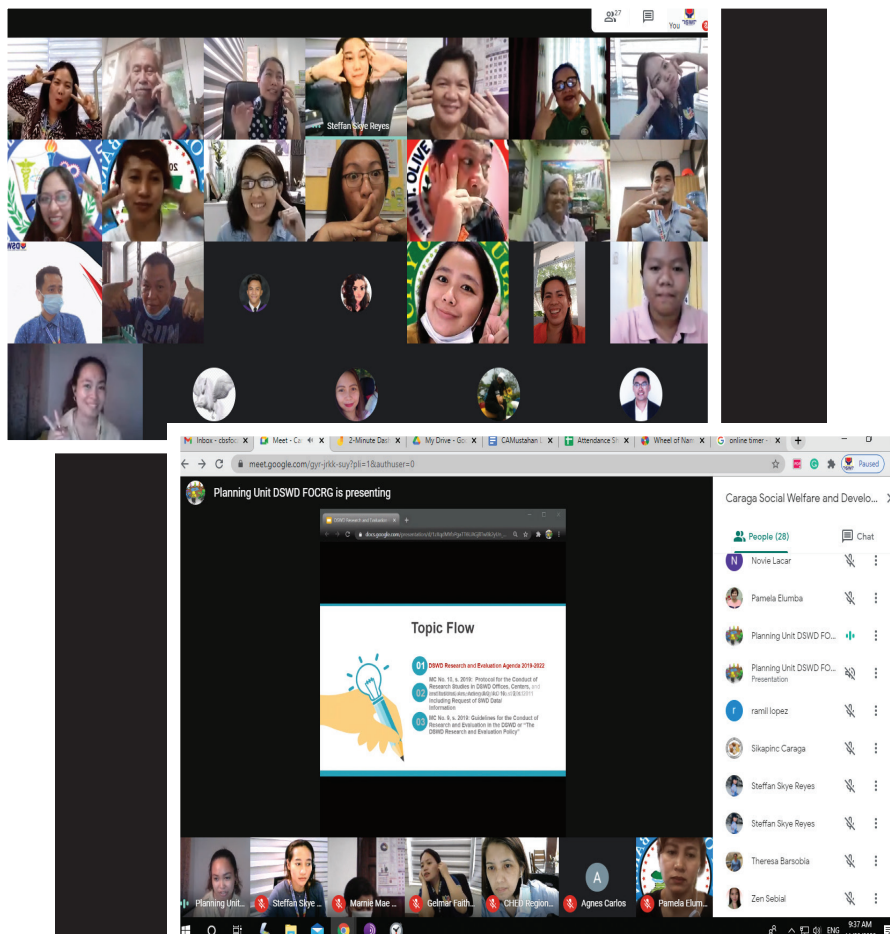
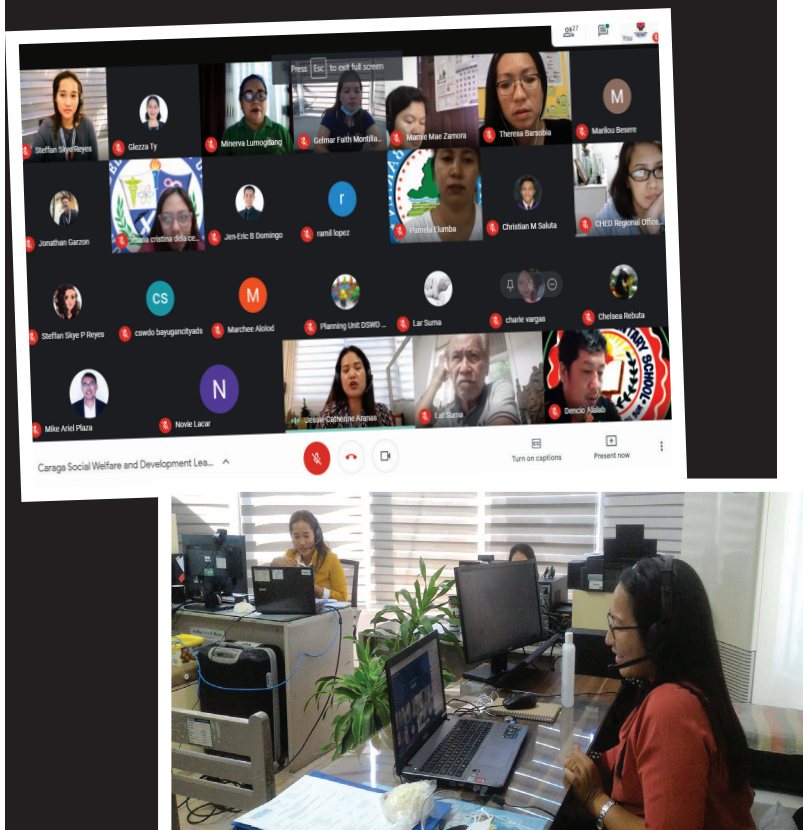
the pandemic, the Network would continue to capacitate members, and ensure to further Strengthen the communication, coordination and collaboration undertakings between and among the network members.

With the theme **“Sa gitna ng pandemya, Ka-LNet, CAMusta ka,”** participants were ecstatic in sharing their stories of how they were able to cope with the stresses of the pandemic, and how they were able to continue in the implementation of their social welfare and development programs.

During the first day of the CAMustahan, the Network was able to revisit the activities conducted for 2020, including updates of conducted activities by the members. The day was capped off with the conduct of the Planning Workshop for 2021.

On Day 2, focus shifted on the discussion on the DSWD Research and Evaluation Agenda, discussed by Felyjane Leray, PDO II of the Policy Development and Planning Section (PDPS). This topic is important since the Research and Evaluation Agenda will be able to generate knowledge based on researches and evaluations that respond to present social development and economic issues as well as to fill up knowledge gaps that are not addressed by the current Social Welfare and Development interventions.

DSWD OIC – Regional Director Ramel F. Jamen, who is also the SWD L-Net Chairperson, extended his heartfelt appreciation to the network saying that he firmly believes that the activities and endeavors of the L-Net is towards the right direction to forge synergy between stakeholders, and the one way to do it is to sustain and strengthen implementation of the different social welfare and development services. #



Snapshots of participants during the 2-day “CAMustahan” session on November 19-20, 2020.

Going above and beyond: **SLP Association proves doubters wrong**

“**B**asta asosasyon dili jud na mulambo, (Associations/ groups often do not succeed).”

These were the words that the members of the Borbon Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) Association kept hearing when they started the operations of their general merchandise project in 2017. Some even said that they would cease to operate in three months or so.

Initially, this comment took a toll on them. They felt that the livelihood project given to them by the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) will not do well and will eventually fail – just like what their critics expected.

Despite this, they pursued to prove their doubters wrong.

Becoming an SLP association, welcoming opportunities

The Borbon SLP Association, based in Barangay Borbon, San Francisco, Agusan del Sur, was organized in February 2016. It is composed of 28 female and 2 male members. The association agreed to propose a general merchandise store as they deemed this as the most feasible project because they were located at the heart of the barangay – making it easier and accessible for all the residents.

In Barangay Borbon, there were existing sari-sari stores but they do not have enough supplies and could not cater to other basic necessities of the community. Residents had to travel 31.9 kilometers (45-minute motorcycle ride) to get to the town center and buy the necessities that were not available in their barangay.

As program participants, the SLP association members also benefited from the opportunity to attend skills trainings like store management and warehousing to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge needed to operate a huge general merchandise store.



A member of the Borbon SLP Association guards their general merchandise store during day time.



SLP Project Development Officer Monina Tanjay (in white) conducts project monitoring last July 2020 at the general merchandise store of the Borbon SLP Association in Barangay Borbon, San Francisco, Agusan del Sur.



Residents of Barangay Borbon flock at the general merchandise store for their basic needs and commodities.

Managing finances, providing employment, & ensuring sustainability

It was true that the SLP association struggled during the early stages of their operation. At first, they were disheartened. But they remembered that they had their commitment to the DSWD-SLP, to their families, and to their own selves that they will make the project grow.

One of the association's goals was to provide stable employment to their members. Hence, they hired one of their members to serve as a cashier and provided her with a fixed salary.

They also tapped barangay tanods (village watchmen) to help them secure the safety of their store, especially at night. In return, they provide an honorarium for the services rendered by the watchmen.

The Borbon SLP Association also regularly deposits their sales to the bank to make sure safekeeping of their resources. Other than that, when they need to purchase goods and supplies for their store, the members would just withdraw the exact amount required to pay the commodities.

From January 2020 up until July 25, 2020, the association has a total earning of Php2,709,760 despite the crisis caused by the COVID-19. Because of travel restrictions, most people in their community would purchase items from them that is why they were able to maintain good sales.

Hitting two birds with one stone

In order to sustain their business during the pandemic, the association also resorted to selling vegetables, kakanin (rice cakes), and viands prepared by the SLP association members. This was a hit among the residents because there are no available carinderia (restaurants or cafeteria) in their barangay.

Aside from making this as a strategy to sustain the sales, they also ventured to this scheme because they wanted to help the members have extra income to help them get through the pandemic. This strategy was also done to spare the members from having to walk around their community to vend their products and to steer them away from the threat of COVID-19, especially that people were advised to stay at home.

From the sales of their add-on products, the SLP association gets 10% from the sales and 90% is returned to the consignee. In this way, the two parties get to benefit from this marketing strategy.

Of establishing partnerships and reaching out to the community

Running for three years now, the association has been able to establish a strong relationship with the Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) of Borbon. Just like what they have committed during the beginning of the project implementation, the BLGU of Borbon continues to extend technical support to the SLP association to contribute to the growth of the association's livelihood.

As part of their partnership, the association donated Php10,000 worth of grocery items to the barangay which were distributed to the most-affected families in their community during the early months of the implementation of the community quarantine.

Both parties relentlessly continue to work together to ensure that they do not only maintain a healthy relationship but also reach out a helping hand to their community.

Going above and beyond

At present, the Borbon SLP Association keeps learning new strategies to achieve their goal of expanding their business and

helping more people in their barangay.

Despite the negative comments from the people, the SLP association has proven their doubters that their initial impressions were wrong. The SLP members had surpassed people's expectations and proved that they were bound to succeed.

Instead of the initial prediction that they were to last for three months only, the association is still running for three years now and counting!

Borbon SLP Association President Margarita Caromayan said that they will never stop working hard and harmoniously. She said that they want people to see that they were also capable of success.

"We were able to benefit from the livelihood grants provided by DSWD-SLP and we will not allow this to go to waste. We want people to know that we have the capacity to grow and become successful," Caromayan said.

Borbon SLP Association's journey was not easy. But in the end, they were able to prove that they were capable of things that people did not expect them to have or to do. For the members of the Borbon SLP Association, a retreat was not an option.

Their only focus is to continue to go above and beyond.

DSWD Caraga launches new monitoring mechanism, ensuring efficient reporting



Glezza T. Ty leads the launching of the system and hands-on workshop for the new monitoring mechanism of the Field Office.



Ramel F. Jamen, officer-in-charge, shares his appreciation on the initiative of the Policy Development and Planning Section (PDPS) in creating and launching of the HPME++ information system last September 28, 2020.

To strengthen the efficiency of the evaluation and monitoring mechanism of the Agency, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office Caraga introduced an Information System for that harmonizes the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the program implementation and the agency's services.

The Harmonized Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation System (HPME++IS) Tool, a breakthrough concept of the Policy Development and Planning Section (PDPS), devices a unified online generation of HPME forms and reports. To make a more comprehensive monitoring system, the HPME previously used was further improved ("++") in the latest version. Features were added, such as the Office Performance Contract, Gender and Development Plan, and others.

"In the past years, we do our monitoring and evaluation manually. We have to photocopy, bind, and consolidate our annual reports by hand. With the HPME++IS, we now have easier access and more secure data collection in the Field Office," Ramel Jamen, Officer-In-Charge of DSWD FO Caraga said.

To test the effectivity of the HPME++IS, a pilot-testing spearheaded by Planning Officer III Glezza T. Ty was conducted at Grand Palace Hotel, Butuan City last September 28-30, 2020. All program focal persons and section heads were invited to integrate valuable inputs for possible enhancement of the system.

The PDPS initiated the use of google sheet in the prior years, using the prescribed template, which somehow accelerated the submission of reports. However, downsides noted based on the

feedbacks from focal persons were observed. In order to speed up the process of data collection, respond to the challenges identified in using the google sheet, and maximize the use the data gathered, the development of HPME++IS was proposed and approved.

"The system shall provide accurate and timely information base for efficient tracking the status of the implemented DSWD programs and services, and help facilitate data to be used in regional planning, program implementation and output-outcome monitoring," Ty said.

The actual launching signals the formal use and adoption of the IS for the reporting related to HPME and eventually to include other necessary documents that will help the Field Office in attaining its five (5) organizational outcomes. #

AgSur farmers get support thru livelihood project from DSWD-SLP



On November 10, 2020, the DSWD-SLP formally handed over the solar drying pavement project to the Barangay Imelda PAMANA Association in Bunawan, Agusan del Sur.



BUSY DAY. A farmer carefully spreads the rice at the newly turned over solar drying pavement for the rice to dry evenly.

Farmer-members of the Barangay Imelda PAMANA Association received a Solar Dryer amounting to PHP 300,000 from the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office Caraga in Barangay Imelda, Bunawan, Agusan del Sur on Tuesday, November 10, 2020. The said project was funded and implemented under the Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA), one of the special projects anchored in the livelihood program of the Department.

Through the solar drying pavement project, it will be much easier and more convenient for the farmers of the SLP association to dry their harvests. Aside from the SLPA members, other farmers residing in Barangay Imelda are also given access to use the project.

SLPA PAMANA President Romeo Daniel said that the association is very grateful to the DSWD-SLP for extending support and assistance to the farmers, especially during this time of pandemic.

“Dako kaayo among pasalamat sa DSWD-SLP sa project nga ilang gihatag sa among dapit. Tungod niini, wala na mi maglisod og pangita og lugar kung asa makabulad sa among humay. Gani, maskin wala pa na-turnover ang project, nagamit na kini sa katawhan (We would like to express our huge gratitude to the DSWD-SLP for the project they established in our community.

Because of this project, we do not have to go through a hard time anymore looking for a place to dry our rice. In fact, even if the project has not been formally handed over to us yet, the community was able to make use of it already),” Daniel shared.

Also present during the turnover ceremony were Sangguniang Bayan Member Ruth Amador, Barangay Kagawad Leny Alayon and Romulo Alejo, and the Barangay Imelda PAMANA Association officers and members.

PAMANA is the Philippine government's program focused on peace and development. It eyes to provide development interventions in poor, marginalized, and conflict-afflicted communities in the country. In DSWD, the Sustainable Livelihood Program is delegated to manage and implement the livelihood component of PAMANA.#

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