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# VOICES FROM THE ISLANDS



*Ituloy natin ang Pagbabago!*



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

# The Cover

"Voices from the Islands" is both celebratory and aspirational. With raw snippets and imagery of ordinary folk, the theme connotes the fundamental objectives and overarching achievements of the Department from the ground up, whose partner-beneficiaries' lives and perspectives have changed through the years. In diverse tongues and through manifold faces, these voices embody, characterize, and personify most nameless vulnerable and disadvantaged Filipinos who continue to resonate "Ituloy natin ang pagbabago".

# Mission

We envision a society where the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged are empowered for an improved quality of life. Towards this end, DSWD will be the world's standard for the delivery of coordinated social services and social protection for poverty reduction by 2030.

# Vision

To develop, implement and coordinate social protection and poverty reduction solutions for and with the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged.

# Values

- Respect for Human Dignity
- Integrity
- Service Excellence

# Credo

- Promote the rights of every individual
- Work for a society of equals
- Build and maximize people's potentials
  - Protect them
  - Enable them
  - Empower them
  - Learn from them
- Involve stakeholders and other partners
- Provide a better future for this and generations to come

# Mandate

To provide assistance to local government units, non-government organizations, other national government agencies, people's organizations, and other members of civil society in effectively implementing programs, projects and services that will alleviate poverty and empower disadvantaged individuals, families and communities for an improved quality of life.

											
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Photo Essay</b>	<b>Message of the President</b>	<b>Message of the Secretary</b>	<b>2015 in Review</b>	<b>Home at last</b>	<b>Hope, Love &amp; Joy</b>	<b>Teaching to serve &amp; inspire</b>	<b>Volunteerism: A pathway to leadership</b>	<b>Omnipresent in disasters</b>	<b>Being old &amp; cared for</b>	<b>'Druja' saves the day</b>	<b>Sharing the joy</b>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>52</b>	<b>2016 Thrusts &amp; Priorities</b>
<b>55</b>	<b>Executive Committee Members</b>
<b>61</b>	<b>Directory of DSWD Officials</b>
<b>65</b>	<b>Annual Report Committee</b>

<b>Out of the shadows</b>		<b>29</b>
<b>A journey back home</b>		<b>31</b>
<b>Indomitable &amp; inspiring</b>		<b>34</b>
<b>A tale of two</b>		<b>37</b>
<b>From malnourished to outstanding</b>		<b>40</b>
<b>Water for peace</b>		<b>43</b>
<b>When hopes did not run dry</b>		<b>45</b>
<b>Women empower themselves</b>		<b>49</b>



**EARNEST**  
Desire for Change



**THE HOPEFULS**  
Brimful of Joy



**THE BIRTH OF**  
New Hope



MALACAÑAN PALACE  
Manila

My warmest greetings to the **Department of Social Welfare and Development** on the publication of your **2015 Annual Report**.

The Philippines has come a long way from being the "Sick Man of Asia" thanks to our tireless efforts to establish inclusive growth and cascade our gains to our countrymen. Your poverty-reduction initiatives help us accelerate our journey to prosperity, and I hope that the DSWD keeps striving to uplift the poor and give them equal opportunities to thrive in our growing economy. May this report galvanize your resolve to work towards achieving your objectives and setting your sights on higher goals in the years to come.

Our government has embarked on the Daang Matuwid to restore integrity and accountability in our institutions. I am confident that citizens will choose the continuity of reform, despite the efforts of others to derail them. As my administration transitions to the next, may your establishment continue our good governance agenda and secure the culture of transparency so that our people may stay on the path to equitable progress. May you remain steadfast partners in public service.

I wish you success in your future endeavors.

**BENIGNO S. AQUINO III**  
The President of the Philippines



In the work of people empowerment, stories are the most potent tools of hope and encouragement. These are testaments to the courage and commitment of people, especially those in the margins, to fight their way through poverty in order to address their needs and realize their dreams.

The pages of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Annual Report for 2015 present a striking and colorful narrative of the voices that have emerged from the islands. These are strong voices of change and reform that give a different view of the work that we do as a department.

While ordinarily we in DSWD are seen as responders to victims of calamities, there is much more to us than meets the eye. The bulk of our work brings us to hinterlands and depressed communities where we engage and interact with people who need support to address their situations of poverty. This is the day-to-day story of my colleagues in the Department.

In the past five years, we have been able to weave the fabric of positive change in countless corners of the country together with the people whom we serve. This is the shared narrative that you will see in the pages of this report.

It is my hope that as you read the stories, you will come to appreciate and have a deeper understanding of what it took for the partner-beneficiaries to carve out their own space in society. These were once unheard voices that are now able to say, "*Kaya natin ang Pagbabago! Ituloy natin ang Pagbabago!*"



**CORAZON JULIANO - SOLIMAN**  
Secretary

# 2015 in Review

This Annual Report is a compendium of the achievements of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in 2015. It captures and illustrates in a storytelling form all facets of its social welfare and development works across the sixteen regions. It took the whole Department - its valiant and hardworking men and women to skillfully and painstakingly weave one story after another to package a worthwhile and inspiring read.

Voices from the Islands, this year's theme, offers a tapestry of the lives and continuing journeys of the Department and its ever-growing family of partner-beneficiaries whose tales of struggles and triumphs continue to define the character and noble intentions of the government's heart and soul, the DSWD.

The narratives from the ground render pictures and scenarios of evolving communities whose imprints and legacies are that of the Department's and every single Filipino's handiwork as both incessantly cultivate aspirations towards uplifting lives of common folks in every corner of the archipelago.

All these consoling and hopeful voices --- as tiny as those of innocent children marching merrily to a remote school, cheerful whispers from farmers at the break of dawn, incognito silhouettes of tribeswomen chanting divinity, and just about every ordinary family noisily jostling around a small table to partake of a humble meal --- characteristically connote hopefulness and strong belief that there are interventions such as those of the Department's various programs mentioned in this Annual Report that make the vulnerable and disadvantaged see a brighter future for their families and children.

Clearly, the Department's various programs and services for the underprivileged sectors of Philippine society are no magic pill; they offer solutions and are in themselves a product of pure and honest intentions to provide that which gives reason to take pride in one's ability to rise above adversities. It empowers communities and individuals so that they are able to think and decide for and help themselves. The conditional cash grant for instance is a perfect example of prompting partner-beneficiaries to prioritize education and health for their children. At the end of the day, they are made to realize and appreciate that literate and healthy children can and will secure their family's future.

As you turn every page and chapter of this Report, you will get a sense of involvement and a deeper appreciation for the Filipinos' ability to celebrate life and cling to their faith no matter the ordeal; in itself signifies the Department's tenacity and unwavering resolve to lift them up from the quagmire of poverty and self-pity.

Any story will tug one's heart, and most experiences or accounts can shake you from lethargy. At the end of the day, your DSWD hopes to touch lives one story at a time.

*Ituloy natin ang pagbabago!*



# Home at last

*Nalayo niya (MCCT-HSF) ako sa kulungan, nawala ako sa kalsada, nakapagtrabaho, naayos yung buhay ko, dati nilalayuan ako ng tao ngayon ginagalang na, nire respeto na rin po.*

Reunited

For the Muñoz couple from Leyte, two years were a long time to search for family members after surviving typhoon Yolanda in 2013. But they eventually found themselves back in each other's arms.

"Ang mister ko ay sumakay ng C130 habang ako at aking mga anak ay nagbus upang makapunta ng Maynila. Naglagi kami sa may Luneta at doon ay nakapagtayo ng barung-barong habang unti-unting nawawalan ng pag-asa kung makikita ko pa kaya ang asawa ko (My husband rode a C130 while my children and I rode the bus to Manila. We stayed in Luneta and there we found a shanty while slowly losing hope if we could still see him)," Lorena Muñoz, 49, shared during the Family Development Session (FDS) workshop for the Modified Conditional Cash Transfer for Homeless Street Families (MCCT-HSF) couples.

MCCT-HSF aims to remove the indigent families from the streets by providing health and education assistance to children ages 0-18 and a financial assistance to avail of the Alternative Family Home (AFH).

In September 2015, Lorena's family became a partner-beneficiary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) MCCT-HSF after she and her children were seen peddling at Ocean Park in Roxas Boulevard in Manila.

"Nagtitinda kami ng chicharon sa maghapon para maipanggastos namin ng dalawa kong anak na kasama ko sa bahay... samantala, yung dalawa kong anak ay nasa Tagbilaran, isang pastor at isang may pamilya na (We were selling pork cracklings all day to have money to spend for my children who live with me, while the other two are in Tagbilaran where one is a pastor and the other has a family of his own)," said Lorena.

Desperate, her husband, Norberto Muñoz, 48 years, travelled from Leyte to Manila to continue his search for his wife and kids until his relative from Pasay City informed him that his family was selling chicharon at Rizal Park.

IMPLEMENTATION OF MODIFIED CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER (MCCT) PROGRAM



TYPES OF MCCT



"Nung nabalitaan ko 'yun, hindi na ako nagdalawang isip pa dahil sobrang gusto ko ng makita ang pamilya ko. Nagtatanong-tanong ako 'dun sa Luneta at sa awa ng Diyos ay kilala sila doon dahil sila daw ang na-reach out ng DSWD kamakailan lang (I did not think twice when I heard the news since I really want to see my family. I was asking around in Luneta about them and thank God, people knew them because DSWD reached them)," Norberto narrated.

After school, their twelve-year old son Michael would help his mother sell chicharon while Lorena does her work as street sweeper under the MCCT-HSF that ensures a source of livelihood for its partner-beneficiaries.

One day, unknown to her mother, Michael would arrive at their rented Alternative Family Home (AFH) along with his father.

Lorena could not contain her happiness and she didn't know what to do. Seeing her husband alive was more than a miracle for her. "Bago ko pinatuloy ang asawa ko sa bahay namin ay nakipag-ugnayan agad ako sa City Link ko kasi sinabi ko sa kanya na solo parent na ako dahil talagang wala na akong pag-asa na makikita ko pa ang asawa ko (Before I let him in, I immediately coordinated with my City Link since I told him I was a solo parent and because I was hopeless I could still see my husband)," she said.

The family is now making up for the lost time.

Homeless no more

For Rolly Cuaderno, 26, a partner-beneficiary of MCCT-HSF, he had more than just financial assistance when he became part of the program in May 2014 after he and the other would-be beneficiaries were reached out at Barangay Laging Handa in Quezon City. He gained security, dignity and respect.

"Nalayo niya (MCCT-HSF) ako sa kulungan, nawala ako sa kalsada, nakapagtrabaho, naayos yung buhay ko. Dati nilalayuan ako ng tao pero ngayon ginagalang na, nire respeto na rin po (It kept me away from prison, from the streets. I was able to work and fix my life. Before, people would evade me. Now, they respect me)," he said.

He recalled, "Kasi nung nasa kalsada kami, sinasabi nila na 'ay huwag yan, mandurukot yan'. Ngayon may trabaho na

kami, pormal na kami, pormal na yung bihis namin, hindi na sila naiilang na lumapit samin (When we were in the streets, people would tell us we're pickpockets. Now that we have work, we look formal with what we wear. They don't feel awkward approaching us)."

Rolly lived a risky and unstable life before the program. He used to be a parking attendant in Timog, Quezon City but when tough times struck and his earnings did not suffice, he resorted to pickpocketing and robbery, things he never imagined he would do which led him to get back and forth to jail.

The program served as a refresh button for him to start anew – new perspectives in life, new priorities, and a whole new persona as well.

He started attending FDS that taught him to handle money and take care of his family. He was also part of Cash-for-Work (CFW) program scheme which helped him take care of his daughter's needs.

The CFW is a short term intervention which provides transitional support and citizenship building through temporary employment in exchange for community works. To date, DSWD provided P7,737,030,476 worth of financial assistance to 520,002 affected families nationwide.

For years, the sky was his roof, establishments his post, streets his bedroom, and he used patched cartons and tarpaulins to comfort and protect him from the heat and the cold. "Seven to twenty-six-years old, kung kani-kanino ako nakitira, mga ibat-ibat na bahay, nakikitulog sabi ko gusto ko ng magkaroon ng matatawag na bahay. Yun na ung simpleng pangarap ko (From the age of seven to twenty-six-years old, I lived and slept in different households. I wanted to have something that I can call home)," said Rolly.

When his grandmother, who he considered his lone guardian, died when he was seven, he got used to the streets of Quezon City that became his shelter and source of income.

Living without home for him was simply perilous and uncomfortable especially with his two-year old daughter Romalyn on his side.

Today, Rolly can only reminisce the most horrible experience in his life on the streets as he would always be indebted for the program that pulled him out of the quagmire. "Yung one time na natulog ako sa burger stand, yun hindi ko makalimutan un. Binagsakan ako ng bangko sa mukha, trip lang po sya, napadaan sa tulugan namin (I will not forget one time I slept at a burger stand. Somebody who just passed by smashed a stool on my face for no reason)."

But it's now goodbye to makeshift or imaginary shelter. Hello, home.

# No more DOTA for a Pantawid Pamilya youth

Before a crowd of 700 Pantawid Pamilya Parent Leaders from Manila at a forum in April 2015, led by the International Holistic Engagement for Life and Progress (I-HELP), a Civil Society Organization (CSO) partner of DSWD-NCR on FDS for Pantawid Pamilya partner-beneficiaries, sixteen-year old Emmanuel Ilagan confidently shared his story of change.

"Dati akong laman ng kalsada o computer shop at laging kasama ang barkada sa paghahamon ng away at pustahan pagdating sa paglalaro ng Defense of the Ancient (DOTA) (I used to be on the streets and in computer shops with my friends, daring fights and betting for online game DOTA)," Emmanuel said.

Then incoming college freshman, Emmanuel attested how the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program of DSWD in partnership with I-HELP formed his values.

Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program is a program investing in human capital development through health & education. It has expanded to 41,519 barangays in all 144 cities & 1,483 municipalities in 80 provinces nationwide.

As a millennial in the computer age, it was difficult for him to disengage from popular interactive online computer games like DOTA which he initially thought was good. Until he lost his interest.

"Isang beses ay nag-invite po ang Filipino Christian Church sa mga umaattend ng FDS na yung anak daw nila ay maaaring sumama sa kanilang Youth Fellowship ata. Yun po ang nagdulot ng magandang pagbabago sa aking buhay; napakalaking pagbabago po sa aking pagkatao (One time, the Filipino Christian Church invited those who usually attend FDS to join their Youth Fellowship. That brought something good in my life. A big change in me)," he recalled.

Emmanuel could not be more thankful for the cash grants from Pantawid that helped him and his siblings for their health and education needs. He pointed out that the attendance of her mother in FDS encouraged him to be a youth leader in the church.

Aside from the financial aspect of the program, Emmanuel recognized how DSWD and I-HELP prompted his family to change holistically. "Maganda talaga ang FDS dahil yun po ang nagdadala ng kaalamang 'di nauubos... bukod po dito, kapag ugali at pananaw sa buhay ang nagbago, mas makakayanan po ng Filipino ang tumawid sa kaunlaran (FDS is really good. It brings unlimited knowledge. When attitude and outlook in life change, Filipinos will be able to cross the path to prosperity)."

Emmanuel is presently taking up Bachelor of Arts in Filipinology at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP).



**CHAPTER 2**

# Hope, Love and Joy

**T**his is not your typical love story of a girl who has found new hope from love.

Let us call her Joy. While her name implies a sweet feeling, it also evokes the opposite: the harsh reality.

At the age of 4, Joy has witnessed pain as she, her two older siblings and mother ran away from their abusive father. Their mother later left them with their relatives in Batangas.

With a failed relationship, Joy's mother decided to have a new family. She and her siblings would find themselves living with other siblings and a stepfather who they initially described to be kind and responsible.

But the death of her other newborn siblings turned their stepfather to physically abuse Joy's mother, then later, Joy and her siblings as they were left by their mother who was then working on her employment documents.

Without knowing the abuse her children have been going through, Joy's mother went to work abroad in 2012. Joy and her siblings were left under the care of their stepfather who forced them to do house chores and take care of his needs. Their school attendance suffered as Joy was allowed to go to school only thrice a week and her siblings only twice.

Then came a time when Joy's stepfather started to kiss her. Innocent as she was, she considered it a gesture of fatherly love but eventually noticed that it was not what it seemed to be. The succeeding incidents became normal for Joy. Her stepfather would give her 'luxury' in exchange for sexual intercourse. To save herself and her siblings from further physical abuses, Joy kept mum about the situation.

It was in 2013 when Joy's teacher noticed the bruises on her face. This led to the discovery of the sexual and physical abuses that the children

“*Sa paglabas ko, hindi ko makakalimutan na kahit gaano kabigat ang problema, wag susuko, dahil may mga taong nagmamahal sa akin at mayroon akong isang kaibigan na tutulong sa akin, si God.*”

residents baptized by Fr. Gerardo Costa. Together with Fr. Costa, private individuals and public servants, including Mayor Edna Tabanda, Mayor Arthur Baldo, Governor Nestor Fongwan, and Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 4 Judge Mia Joy Cawed welcomed the children to the Christian community.

*“Through baptism, we welcome the children to our community, to the Christian community. We are called to become mothers and fathers but there are times that we fail to do so. By baptizing the children, we are protecting them from everything that is evil,” Fr. Costa said.*

One of the private individuals who served as godparents for the children was newly-wed Carloyd Inlubang, 24 years old. *“Kahit wala pa akong anak, yung pagiging ninong ko kay Angelica ay parang extension na rin ng pagiging parent ko. I-guguide ko siya para maging mabuting anak, lalo na sa magiging adoptive parents nya (Even if I don't have a child yet, being a godfather to Angelica is an extension of my being a parent. I will guide her so she will become a good daughter especially to her adoptive parents),” Carloyd said.*

DSWD Officer-in-Charge Regional Director Janet Armas expressed gratitude for the continued support given to the children in the RSCC.

*“We appreciate not just the donations, but most importantly the time, care, and love that we are giving to the children. Sana*



have been going through. On the same year, Joy was referred to the Regional Haven for Women and Girls (Regional Haven) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the Cordillera region.

Through the Regional Haven, Joy was able to undergo educational, psychological, social, home life, health, economic, recreational, developmental and spiritual services. To help her overcome the incident, Joy also underwent play therapy which aims to process her emotions and express her thoughts through play. This psychotherapeutic tool also helps the child do stress debriefing.

Joy was also able to continue her studies and finished fourth grade while she stayed at the Regional Haven.

Joy was one of the 50 clients discharged from the Regional Haven for the first quarter of 2015. Clients like Joy have undergone various services to prepare them for re-integration to their families and communities. The Regional Haven also assisted them on their legal needs.

For the second quarter of 2015, other fifteen residents at the Haven were provided with continuous rehabilitation and psychosocial services to prepare them for their reintegration in the community.

The Regional Haven is a temporary shelter managed by the DSWD which caters to disadvantaged, vulnerable, abused, and exploited women and girls needing protective custody and psychosocial care. Services provided to them are geared towards enabling them to recover from the traumatic effects of abuses and exploitation, restoring their social function and regaining their self-worth and dignity.

*“Masaya ako na makakalabas na ako [sa Regional Haven], pero nalulungkot din. Mamimiss ko ang mga kasama ko, pero masaya*

*ako dahil makakasama ko na uli ang aking pamilya. Excited din akong mag-aral (I am happy that I will finally leave Regional Haven but also sad. I will miss my colleagues but I am happy that I will be with my family again. I am also excited to go to school),” Joy said.*

She dreams of becoming a doctor someday whose services will be for free and wants to go back to the Regional Haven to help other clients.

Joy's guardian also lauded her strength. *“Malaking bagay na nag-stay siya [Joy] sa Haven. Lumakas ang kanyang kalooban. Mabigat yung sinapit nya, pero sa pamamagitan ng Regional Haven naitaguyod niya yung pisikal at emosyonal na kakayanan niya. Parang walang nangyaring hindi maganda sa kanya (Joy's stay at the Regional Haven is a huge factor. It made her strong. She went through hardships but because of it, she was able to harness her physical and emotional capabilities),” the guardian said.*

Joy could only learn from this entire experience. *“Sa paglabas ko, hindi ko makakalimutan na kahit gaano kabigat ang problema, huwag susuko, dahil may mga taong nagmamahal sa akin at mayroon akong isang kaibigan na tutulong sa akin, si God (As I leave, I will never forget that no matter how weighty the problem is, never give up because there are people who love me and I have a friend in God who will help me).”*

At present, Joy is with her family, living her life equipped with the skills and lessons the Regional Haven has taught her. The love of her family and friends is slowly mending the wounds and scars of her past, and gives her the joy she deserves for a renewed hope and a better life.

## RSCC: More than a facility, a home

A feeling of unfamiliarity engulfed me as I walked into the hall of the Reception and Study Center for Children (RSCC) in Puguis, La Trinidad, Benguet. I expected to see the children who reside in the Center, their house parents, some volunteers and guests to take part in a celebration. But what I saw gave me a feeling of home as the area was filled with children playing and some being cuddled.

The RSCC is one of the temporary residential care facilities run by the DSWD. It provides interventions to abused, neglected, abandoned, surrendered, and exploited children and those with special needs such as children at risk and children who are in need of alternative family care.

RSCC was formerly called Lingap Center which catered to a host of clients including disadvantaged and abused women, and children in conflict with the law. Over time, the Center was developed into a facility which currently focuses in the provision of care and protection to children 0-6 years old.

In November 2015, the RSCC marked its 25th year. This coincided with the 23rd National Children's Month Celebration with fourteen

*ipagpatuloy natin ang pagmamahalan sa ating mga pamilya at ito ay palawakin natin sa ating komunidad para matapos na ang pang-aabuso sa mga bata (I hope we will continue to love our family and extend this to our community in order to stop abuses on children) This will be possible if we come together to stop abuse. Let no child be left behind,” Director Armas said.*

As of November 2015, there are 32 children being catered in the RSCC. Director Armas said these children have not yet found the family that they could call their own but are positive that they would be able to have that through foster care and adoption.

She encouraged interested individuals to also visit the other centers such as the Regional Rehabilitation Center for the Youth and the Regional Haven for Women and Girls.

Andrew, a former RSCC resident who is now residing in the United States expressed his gratitude through a video message for being part of the Center. *“Noong nasa RSCC ako, di ako nakikinig sa caregivers kasi akala ko alam ko na ang lahat higit sa kanila. Pero ngayon, gusto kong magpasalamat sa RSCC. I am now on my way towards being responsible. Hindi masama ang pag-stay sa RSCC (When I was at RSCC, I refuse to listen to caregivers because I thought I knew everything than them. But now, I want to thank RSCC. It's not a bad thing to stay at RSCC).”*

With the support, love and care that the Center staff and volunteers give the children, RSCC stands not just a facility but a home.

### RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES



**RECEPTION & STUDY CENTER FOR CHILDREN**

**798**



### HAVEN FOR CHILDREN

**210 CLIENTS SERVED FOR CY 2015**

# Teaching to serve & inspire



“ I want to mold young minds and encourage them to study hard despite poverty. It should not be a hindrance in getting good education and being successful. ”

Gay Myrell Abrogena and Mary Rose Cabrera once believed that getting a college degree was an elusive dream.

Now teachers, both are ready to give back to their communities. Thanks to the Students Grant-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation (SGP-PA).

Myrell and Mary Rose belong to families who are partner-beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program in Ilocos. Through the SGP-PA, an educational program for college students from Pantawid Pamilya households, they were given the opportunity to continue their studies and finish higher education.

Myrell and Mary Rose's hard work paid off when they passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). "Passing the LET is a dream come true. Years ago, I wasn't sure if I would be able to finish my studies, but now I'm already a licensed teacher. I'm so happy! Another chapter of my life begins, thanks to SGP-PA," said twenty-one year old Myrell who graduated from Mariano Marcos State University.

Mary Rose, who also graduated from Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University, was also elated when

she passed the teachers' licensure examination. "I didn't have any second thoughts when I applied for the scholarship," she said. "I worked hard to graduate and pass the LET. I hope I will be able to serve our country soon."

Both SGP-PA grantees took up Bachelor in Elementary Education and were eventually hired in public schools in their respective communities.

### Inspiring others

Myrell and Mary Rose share their passion for education to their students. They said their experiences could serve as inspiration to poor children like them to achieve their dreams.

"I want to mold young minds and encourage them to study hard despite poverty. It should not be a hindrance in getting good education and being successful," Myrell said.

Mary Rose, on the other hand, hoped to inspire students to serve others. She had this piece of advice to the student grantees of SGP-PA: "Study hard and strive to achieve your goals. An opportunity like this does not come very often, so don't waste it."

### Over 30,000 student-grantees served

SGP-PA is a joint program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC), and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

It helps to increase the number of graduates in higher education from poor households and get them employed in various high-level jobs. This way, the grantees will be able to help lift their families out of poverty.

Each SGP-PA scholar is entitled to receive P10,000 for tuition and P2,500 for textbooks and other learning materials per semester. A scholar also gets a monthly stipend of P3,500 for board and lodging, clothing, health, and medical needs, basic school supplies, and other related expenses. A total of P30,000 worth of educational assistance is given to a student every semester.

As of 2015, there were 31,350 SGP-PA student-grantees enrolled in 112 state universities and colleges nationwide.

# HOPEFUL & Determined

Dismissing all odds, twenty-year old Pio Angelo Ballesteros courageously claimed as he started establishing his career after his graduation from the Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University-South La Union Campus. Pio graduated cum laude with a degree in Bachelor of Science in Biology and considered this a passport in becoming a successful medical doctor someday.

Second child to an unemployed father and a mother who works as barangay secretary, Pio commended the Expanded Students' Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation (ESGPPA). "Napakalaki po nitong tulong (This is a huge help)," he said.

To pursue his dream, he plans to work in the meantime to earn for his future medical study. He hopes to qualify for a research assistant post in a reputable university.

To beef up his credentials and increase probability of landing a better-paying job, he plans to take up a Master's Degree this year. Setting aside financial constraints, he is determined to triumph over challenges in his chosen career.

According to Pio, he would not waste the chance because he considered the job opportunity as his stepping stone to reach his ultimate dream to be part of the medical field. He said, "I do not have to be afraid to do things just because of financial constraints. I visualize a secure future for me and my family."

A proud product of ESGPPA, Pio has always wanted to leave an indelible mark on the government's effort to provide access to quality education to poor but deserving students.



“  
I am expecting for the best, but I am also  
prepared for the worst.”

# Volunteerism: A pathway to great leadership



CHAPTER 4

“  
The achievements,  
recognition and travel  
perks in PYAP cannot  
equal the most  
significant learning  
I got from this  
experience. That of  
finding myself.”

The distinctions and accolades seemed endless for this once out-of-school youth (OSY): Ayala Young Leader, Gawad Heny Lopez Bayaning Kabataang Pilipino Nominee, Member of the National Youth Parliament, and Delegate of the 31st Ship for Southeast Asian Youth Program.

For Jennelson Bilag Gorospe, these are no match to volunteerism which for him is his life's achievement. When he stepped into the ladder of higher learning in 2002 at the Cagayan State University (CSU)-Tuguegarao Campus, his hunger for knowledge was halted due to economic reasons that led him back to his barangay and continue his learning beyond the four corners of formal education.

Financial support from his Aunt for his education was temporarily stopped when she got married. His parents could not afford to send him and his siblings to school all at the

same time. Thus, he had to give way for his siblings to finish high school.

This however, did not dampen the spirit of the young Jennelson whose dreams were bigger than his bruised ego. Instead, he dreamed some more and vowed to return to CSU stronger, more determined and confident.

Joining Pag-asa Youth Association of the Philippines (PYAP) made his time away from school worthwhile. In 2002, Cagayan Valley saw the rise of a leader from the Municipality of Amulung, Cagayan --- a leader who put Cagayan Valley on the Philippine map for youth development. At seventeen, Jennelson became president of PYAP Regional Federation from 2002 to 2005.

Unbeknownst to many, his stint would bring out the best in him as a volunteer. Thanks to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) for paving the way for volunteerism.





# In the eyes of social workers: A reflection

“ It took a pair of slippers for them to stand again. It took a pair of slippers to start chasing their dreams again. ”

Do you remember the first time you got hurt when you walked barefoot on rocks, sand or pavements under the scorching heat of the sun? Or how about seeing farmers dipped their feet on mud before the sun peaks until it sets without ever complaining? You were probably too busy to even think how they endured all these or have grown accustomed to what we all thought was normal.

## The barefoot lady

It broke my heart to see an old lady in her mid-seventies wearing nothing on her feet during one of the field simulations that DSWD Field Office (FO) II conducted in preparation for the second round of Family Assessment or National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR), also known as Listahanan.

The Listahanan is an information management system that identifies who and where the poor are in the country. The system makes available to national government agencies and other social protection stakeholders a database of poor families as reference in identifying potential beneficiaries of social protection programs.

I could see her walked with difficulty on uneven ground. I sensed that each step was tentative and unbearably painful. It took a beating on her. *“Why does she need to experience this? If only I was rich. If only I was powerful enough to change her condition,”* so I thought.

When she finally reached the doorsteps, her radiant smile greeted us. She could still afford a smile after what she went through. She saw hope in us. Finally, after decades of painful struggles, help was coming her way. This kind puts pressure on people working for DSWD FO II to deliver yet at the same time, gives a sense of gratification when one succeeds in helping the ones who deserve it.

## Restoring faith

For the longest time, the needy in Region II have searched for a beacon of hope; something that they could cling to. Then came DSWD FO II's version of Listahanan.

All of a sudden, there was reason to hope again. With the financial assistance that will be given to the poorest of the poor after Listahanan identifies them, they will be able to buy basic necessities.

It all started with bare feet. It took a pair of slippers for them to stand again - to start chasing their dreams again.

Listahanan works on the same values and principles. All it wants is to change lives for the better.

## Hope springs eternal

It is common for people to be adversarial towards the government and its various departments and agencies when their demands are not met. Thus, their general lack of trust and dissatisfaction on the government's overall performance. This is not new; history would tell

us that it is something difficult to eradicate. Should it be the government's crusade to win the trust of the people again?

DSWD for one is not without liabilities. And it is not about incompetency but more of things beyond its control. As some would say, no matter how good your intentions are, you cannot control what people have to say or think. But one can control his or her actions, making sure they are good enough.

The Listahanan for example, starts with the people and ends with the people. The Department's mandate is to aid the people in need. As is its name, it is for the peoples' social welfare and development. The first and foremost loyalty of the Department is to the people.

## Changing perception

Try to ask the ordinary people for words that they can associate DSWD with, and they come up with words like help, aid, assistance, support, and the likes. You see, people are slowly embracing and acknowledging what the Department has accomplished for the masses. DSWD FO II for instance has always kept its promise of continuous assistance in the future.

Dexter Addatu, an enumerator for Listahanan in Tuguegarao City said that he associates DSWD FO II with help or assistance to the poor people of the region. *“Gobyernong (department) tumutulong sa mga mahihirap at nangangailangan (A government that helps the poor and the needy),”* he said.

He also believes that DSWD FO II is doing its part in identifying the poor people who need assistance through Listahanan. He said that if ever he gets the opportunity to be a part of DSWD after the assessment is over, he will definitely take it.

Jovelyn Perucho, an encoder for Listahanan said she believes that the agency is doing its function of helping the people, especially the poor. She also relishes the thought, that if given the opportunity to be part of the Department after some needed experience, she wants to share her insights. *“Yes, to learn more and share my knowledge,”* she said, when asked why she would be open to working in the Department full-time.

## Change as the only thing constant

DSWD FO II has gone a long way. It changed for the better over time. Through the hard work and commitment of its employees, it now reaches more people in the region than the previous years. More programs that target the needy are up and running. More people are getting assistance and as a result, you see people smiling and being inspired again to do better. They believe that DSWD FO II through Listahanan will still do better as it still aspires to include in the list more poor households to get the assistance they deserve.

Christopher Soriano, DSWD FO II Regional Field Supervisor, is one of those who consider the experience of being part of the Listahanan project as ennobling.

*“Being part of Listahanan is a bittersweet experience. Hundreds or even thousands of hours of sleep were given up just to train and deploy field staff to ensure that no families are left behind,”* Soriano said.

People have waited long enough to be included in the list. It is about time they see their names on it. DSWD Region II promises just that.

To date, the result of the second round of household assessment for Listahanan indicated 15,760,463 families or 103% of the 15 million household target that have already been assessed.

## A trailblazer

PYAP is a duly constituted barangay-based organization of the OSY between 15 to 24 years old who are clientele of DSWD. It was first incorporated in July 1974 with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) under the name of Pag-asa Youth Movement (PYM) and thus became an affiliate organization of DSWD as a result of its innovative programs and services to the youth.

PYAP Dafunganay Chapter initiated Clean and Green activities in the community such as communal garden, reading center, and mini post along barangay roads. Through the Municipal Social Work and Development Office (MSWDO) and Technological Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the group availed themselves of Rattan Craft Training attended by 32 OSYs.

During his term as president of PYAP Dafunganay Chapter, he became a member of the Barangay Youth Development Council, Barangay Development Council, Barangay Sports and Development Council, and Barangay Environment Management Council where he participated in skills training in the barangay and other activities of the Municipal Federation.

PYAP Dafunganay was recognized as the Most Outstanding Youth Organization of the Municipality in 2003, an accomplishment which paved the way for Jennelson to strive harder and do more for his municipality.

With his display of leadership, he was elected Municipal Federation President of PYAP Amulung, Cagayan where members participated in several capability-building seminars and trainings.

He eventually became the president of the Regional Federation where he represented the region as a member of the PYAP National Board of Trustees in the National Conference.

## A fitting comeback

The list of achievements and recognitions went on for Jennelson. However, his most significant take-away from all the three years of volunteer work could not be quantified and summed up into just one.

*“The achievements, recognitions and travel perks in PYAP cannot equal the most significant learning I got from this experience. That of finding myself,”* says Jennelson.

For him, PYAP through the intervention of DSWD led him to so many opportunities that could not be found in the four corners of any learning institution. It is the journey of making himself better while out of school that he considered the greatest reward.

He went back to school in 2005 and coveted the highest student government position in CSU. He finished his degree in Public Administration in 2008.

At present, Jennelson is a permanent employee of the Municipality of Amulung, Cagayan as its Planning Development Committee Staff and hold three designations as Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator, Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer, and Municipal Tourism Officer.

*“I am who I am now because of my learnings from PYAP. Thanks to DSWD. It molded me in dealing with the harsh realities of life and fanned my passion for learning and compassion for others,”* Jennelson mused.



# OMNIPRESENT IN DISASTERS

“  
*This will make a huge difference in the aftermath of a disaster as we are now able to significantly expand the number of people to which we can provide immediate life-saving food.*  
 ”

**T**he Department of Social Welfare & Development (DSWD) is always quick to help and give its full force. It has always been at the center of minor and major disasters.

On December 15, when typhoon Nona struck six provinces in Central Luzon, some P11,604,908.40 worth of relief goods were immediately provided to the victims.

As part of its augmentation support to the local government units (LGUs), the Department prepositioned 1,000 family food packs each to the eight municipalities of the 4th District of Pampanga. This was in preparation for the pre-emptive evacuation of families who would most likely be affected by flooding due to continuous rains.

Likewise, the DSWD Central Office sent 40,000 family food packs to augment the resources of the Field Office (FO). Of these, 10,000 were delivered directly to the Provincial Government of Nueva Ecija, 10,000 to Aurora, another 10,000 for the provinces of Pampanga and Bulacan, and another 10,000 food packs as standby supplies for the municipalities in Nueva Ecija, which would need additional food assistance.

The DSWD Central Office likewise allotted P10 million standby funds for the region that were used to purchase emergency relief supplies.

All told, Nona affected 131,358 families that consisted of 606,669 persons from 35 municipalities in the six provinces of Central Luzon. Nueva Ecija, the hardest hit, had 73,215 families affected, followed by Pampanga with 26,479, and Bulacan with 25,645.

Before the onslaught of typhoon, DSWD's Quick Response Teams (QRTs) were already activated which closely monitored the weather condition in the affected areas, and coordinated with the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committees (DRRMC).

Disaster teams in the regions were on alert status and close coordination with the LGUs for resource augmentation when needed.

As the lead agency of the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster under the humanitarian cluster system of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), the Department continued to assist LGUs in evacuating affected families and providing temporary shelters until they were able to return to their homes.

Secretary Corazon Juliano-Soliman said the number of evacuees significantly decreased from 77,577 families at the height of the typhoon to 15,268 families as local authorities gave them the go-signal to return home, especially in Bicol and Eastern Visayas Regions.

She assured that DSWD disaster-response teams would continue to coordinate with LGUs to determine the other needs of the evacuees and to initiate the implementation of interventions such as Cash-for-Work, Food-for-Work, and Shelter Assistance for the recovery phase.

The Department has always made it a point to alert residents in areas that would be potentially affected by any incoming typhoon.



# A modern repacking system



A revamped and modernized repacking system has been set up by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP) to speed up the production of emergency family food packs in times of disasters.

Rice bagging machines, case erectors, a conveyor system and a pallet racking system, which were inaugurated in September 2015 at the National Resource Operations Center (NROC) in Pasay City, will allow the government to produce more than 50,000 family food packs per day during disaster, enough to feed more than 250,000 people for three days.

Also known as the Mechanized Production System, which is supported by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), is expected to improve the national response capacity in the Philippines. Built in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan), it is ready for swift response when there is a disaster.

*"We learnt some important lessons as we mobilised relief for the victims of Typhoon Yolanda,"* said Asif Ahmad, UK Ambassador to the Philippines. *"Speed is of the essence in delivering essential survival requirements to people in desperate situations following a natural disaster. This UK government-supported programme will mean that food in the right condition will be delivered quicker and more efficiently."*

Praveen Agrawal, UNWFP Philippines Representative and Country Director was pleased to introduce the mechanized production system in the country. "This will make a huge difference in the aftermath of a disaster as we are now able to significantly expand the number of people to which we can provide immediate life-saving food."

The family food pack, which consists of rice, canned goods and coffee, can be packed in a small box for one family, with the help of the mechanized production system that is able to assemble all of the rations in one streamlined process.

*"We thank the UNWFP and DFID for this support,"* Secretary Corazon Juliano-Soliman said. *"This is just one of the many efforts we are undertaking to improve the country's disaster management program. The new system will enable the Department to become more responsive in meeting the food needs of survivors of disasters."*

The modernization of the family food pack production facility is the result of the partnership between DSWD, the Office of Civil Defense and WFP to enhance disaster-preparedness in the Philippines. Other projects include establishing a network of disaster-response facilities in Clark, Cebu, and General Santos, as well as running a training program that focuses on emergency logistics and the disaster-response supply chain.

## NATIONAL RESOURCE OPERATIONS SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FAMILY FOOD PACKS  
**877,145**

FFP'S DISTRIBUTED  
**723,878**

INDIVIDUALS SERVED  
**3,619,390**

DAY JOBS GENERATED  
**10,541**

VOLUNTEERS (CIVILIANS/NON CIVILIANS)  
**10,541**

USED CLOTHING  
**992,288**

DELIVERY VEHICLES MOBILIZED  
**767**

PROCESSED FOREIGN DONATIONS  
**PHP 173,317,060**

DISPOSED USERVICEABLE MATERIALS  
**50,313 KG**

DISPOSAL RETURNS  
**PHP 637,418.60**



# Being old & cared for

**L**olo Felix Encarnacion, 79, a resident of Barangay San Guillermo in Talisay, Batangas, receives his monthly pension as a beneficiary of DSWD's Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens program. As an elderly, besides providing for his daily needs, the pension makes him feel he is taken care of by the government.

Elders have their own struggles. Imagine if they were being abandoned or neglected by their loved ones and families. Has the government been responsive to their needs?

At 86, Lola Angelita Manalo of Barangay 8 in Talisay, Batangas, tries to live independently. Her seven children now have families of their own. Unmindful of the physical limitations, she still ekes out a living from peddling from one house to the other. Knowing full well the difficulty of raising a family, she does not want to be a burden to them.

Lolo Felix Encarnacion is in the same situation. He has eight children who raise families of their own. He lives alone and fends for himself. *"Kahit matanda na ako, tuloy pa rin ang pagtatanim ko para may mapagkunan ng pagkain at maibenta na rin para may panggastos ako* (Even if I am old, I still continue farming so I can eat and sell for my expenses)," Lolo Felix shared.

According to the National Statistics Coordinating Board (NSCB), senior citizens account for 3.83% of Philippine population and is expected to increase to 10.25 percent by 2025.

Though both of them chose not to bother their children and their families, they are happy to become partner-beneficiaries of DSWD's Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens in 2014. They are among the 60,938 senior citizens who are partner-beneficiaries of this program in CALABARZON.

In the last quarter of 2015, the Department handed over the processing of payments for beneficiaries to 94 local government units (LGUs) in CALABARZON which piloted the new mechanism.

In the past, the DSWD regional offices managed the monthly pensions of the beneficiaries. The new process has funds being transferred to LGUs for direct release to them. According to Cefronia Majuelo, focal person for the Social Pension Program in DSWD IV-A, the new process has been piloted to performing local governments with track records in program implementation and liquidation of funds.



## SOCIAL PENSION PROGRAM

FOR CY 2015, A TOTAL OF

**877,198**



**SOCIAL PENSIONERS**  
OR **93.36%**  
OUT OF THE  
**939,609**  
**TARGET** ELIGIBLE 65 YEARS & ABOVE

The conduct of pay-out is still on-going in II Regions as of this date to cover all the remaining beneficiaries for CY 2015. Other delivery schemes were also implemented to further improve and facilitate pay-outs through: Fund Transfer to LGUs; FDO-SDG Pay-out; Door-to-Door Delivery, and Door-to-Door Service Provider by Banks.

The program provides a monthly P500 subsidy to indigent senior citizens based on the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010. Qualified beneficiaries are 65 years old and above who are frail, sickly or with disability. They should not be receiving any pension and have no permanent source of income or regular support from relatives.

*"Malaking tulong sa akin ang natanggap ko mula sa programa dahil dito ko na kinukuha ang pambili ng aking gamot. Pagkagaling sa payout, laging bumibili ako ng bigas at gamot* (The program is a huge help because I am able to buy medicines.

After payout, I always buy rice and medicines)," Lola Angelita said.

Both seniors could only thank the government for the monthly financial assistance as this helps them with their basic survival needs. This is apart from the 20% discount on medicines, food, and transportation when they use their senior citizens' card.

*"Kahit matanda na kami, iniintindi pa rin kami ng gobyerno. Isang napakalaking biyaya ito sa amin* (Even if we are old, the government still takes care of us. It is such a huge blessing)," she said.

Lolo Felix, on the other hand has always been appreciative. *"Pinapahalagahan ko ang programang ito dahil pakiramdam ko, pinapahalagahan rin kami ng gobyerno* (I deem the program to be very important because I feel the government also regards us as important)," he said.

Lola Angelita and Lolo Felix, who are both presidents of the association of senior citizens in their respective barangays, saw the impact of social pension in their lives. Senior citizens like them are more independent and free to move about with little financial stress.



# Urduja

## saves the day

In the midst of a sea paradise in Taytay, Palawan, there is a strong, independent and dedicated woman popularly known as Urduja.

If the name rings a bell, it is because Urduja is a legendary Filipino heroine recognized for her strong leadership and passion for serving the people. Deviating from stereotype about women being weak and passive, Urduja showed that she was a ruler who could mobilize and defend her people. She was considered a true warrior.

Much like Gaudiosa Alto, 63, the president of Bagong Pag-Asa Association (BPA), an organization guided by Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office (FO) - MiMaRoPa through the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP). Residents found it fit to label her "Urduja of Seaweeds Production".

SLP is a community-based capacity building program implemented through the Community-Driven Enterprise Development approach, which equips program participants actively contribute to production & labor markets by looking at available resources at accessible markets. Under the Microenterprise Development Track of SLP, partners are provided with capital assistance of P10,000 each.

During a field visit, as the cold breeze caressed her skin and the splash of water occasionally lingered on her feet, Gaudiosa narrated her story that pierced through the hearts and souls of the listeners. She looked straight in our eyes as she told every chapter of her life --- the journeys, failures, and triumphs that came her way.

“  
Dito kami kumukuha ng pagkain at mga gamit na  
pampaaral sa aming mga anak.  
”

### Life as dark as coal

Gaudiosa said life before the SLP seaweeds production was full of hardship and uncertainty. "Mahirap po ang buhay namin dati bago 'yang SLP, para pong laging may pangamba (Life was difficult before SLP. There always seemed to be apprehension)," she recalled.

Coal mining was her primary source of income. As a coal miner, Gaudiosa likened her life to darkness and fear. She thought her life was always at risk.

"Dati po kaming nag-uuling. Para kami ay maka-survive (pinasok na namin ang pag-uuling). Ay mahirap mag-uuling! Buhay ang nakataya dyan (We used to do coal to survive. It is difficult. Our lives are at stake)," said teary-eyed Gaudiosa.

Aside from being illegal, coal mining posed risks in her health and the environment.

But she did not lose hope. This pushed her to look for greater opportunities. With the help of Edilberto Felizarte, chairman of Pamantulon Taytay Palawan Barangay, she discovered the opportunities offered by SLP.

"Humingi si kapitan ng tulong sa SLP kung pwede raw bigyan kami ng hanapbuhay. Ito nga ang binigay, ang pagsi-seaweeds (Our barangay captain sought assistance from SLP to give us livelihood which is seaweeds production)," she said.

### Seaweeds: treasure of the sea

SLP introduced Seaweeds Production in 2013. This project was offered by DSWD-SLP to Gaudiosa since the municipality of Taytay is known to provide a sustainable environment for seaweed production because it is strategically located in a relatively typhoon-free area - has wide reef areas, extended marine coastlines, and wide coastal shelves.

Knowing full well that their knowledge and skills in seaweeds farming would improve, Gaudiosa, together with other

partner-beneficiaries, went through a six-day training of SLP provided by the Department of Agriculture Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) Regional Fisheries Training Center Palawan and DSWD-SLP.

Little did they know that the training would forever change their lives.

"Napakasaya ko po. Malaking tulong talaga ang pagsi-seaweeds sa amin. Laking pagbabago po talaga (I am very happy. Seaweeds are a big help to us. There's a big change)," said Gaudios wearing her sweetest and sincerest smile.

She was able to let loose of a dragging and hazardous livelihood. No more sleepless nights and worries of what their present work may bring them. Their families did not have to worry as well. Emptiness, risk and darkness were things of the past; only a future full of hope and prosperity this time.

### Seaweeds as wealth

Gaudiosa considered every strand of seaweeds as a rope made of gold, a discovered wealth. As seaweeds became the primary source of income, her relationship with her family and the community strengthened. "Dito kami kumukuha ng pagkain at mga gamit na pampaaral sa aming mga anak (This is where we get our needs for food and the children's education)."

Seaweeds also transformed the lives of members of her community. With the help of DSWD-SLP, two major associations were organized: Bagong Pag-asa where Gaudiosa is president and Taytay Palawan Seaweed Farmers Federation.

During planting and harvesting season, they would gather to share stories of unwavering hopes and never-ending laughs.

# DSWD

## links Pantawid Pamilya entreps to consumers

What better way to help budding Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program entrepreneurs but to promote their products through a nationwide holiday bazaar?

In December 2015, the DSWD conducted the PaskuJuan simultaneously in various parts of the country. PaskuJuan is a bazaar for Pantawid Pamilya partner-beneficiaries who are being assisted via SLP.

In the National Capital Region (NCR), Pantawid Pamilya entrepreneurs from the 17 regions participated and sold their products in the bazaar at the Araneta Center in Cubao, Quezon City.

Unique products such as squash noodles, shell crafts, handmade jute slippers, dried fish, and decorative flowers made of corn husk were bestsellers. Coffee, handmade brooms, and processed foods were equally patronized by the public.

"The success of PaskuJuan last year prompted us to institutionalize it as a yearly activity. It is one way of helping the partner-beneficiaries market their products to the public," Secretary Corazon Juliano-Soliman said. "Those who bought at the PaskuJuan also helped the families earn."

### Grateful for a chance to earn

The beneficiaries were grateful for such activities as they profit better than their regular selling days.

Maria Marissa Alperez, who sold doormats, shared, "Mas malakas ang kita dito sa bazaar kumpara sa normal na araw (I earned more here in the bazaar compared to ordinary selling days)."

Another beneficiary, Jesusana Moya of Pateros, said, "Nagpapasalamat po ako sa DSWD dahil sa pagbibigay nila sa amin ng tulong. Dahil sa SLP, natulungan ko po ang aking pamilya. Nagpapasalamat din po ako at naimbitahan po kami at nakabenta kami nang marami (I am grateful to DSWD for the help extended to our family through the SLP, and for organizing this bazaar where we sold a lot of our products)."

Julius Bulawon, Project Development Officer, accompanied the beneficiaries from Sta. Cruz, Occidental Mindoro. He provides technical assistance to the beneficiaries who formed the Barahan Corn Husk Handicraft Association. Their products include colorful decorative flowers made of corn husk.



"Malaking tulong po itong PaskuJuan sa mga beneficiaries kasi may pagkakataon sila na maipakilala ang kanilang produkto at magkaroon ng linkage sa mga kliyente (This PaskuJuan is a big help to the beneficiaries as it provides them the opportunity to introduce their products and have linkage with possible clients)," Julius said.

He noted that the 50 members of the association, who used to be plain housewives, are now able to bring extra income to their family. He also observed that the mothers have gained more confidence in dealing with the public as demonstrated by their enthusiasm to join bazaars and product fairs.

From January 2011 to October 2015, SLP has served a total of 851,505 families where 87% or 740,665 are Pantawid Pamilya partner-beneficiaries and 13% or 110,840 are non-Pantawid Pamilya households assessed as poor through the Listahanan, a database of poor families.

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM SERVED

507,607

FAMILY BENEFICIARIES



34% HIGHER THAN THE TARGET 378,822



# Sharing the joy of parenting adoptive children

*We will ensure that she is truly loved and be provided with security blanket that will protect her from any threat or being abandoned again.*

**K**enjie Andal, an adoptive father of a two-year old girl shared his and his wife's journey in building a home through adoption. With no reservation, he started his sharing with issues on infertility which, he said, essentially hindered them from embarking on adoptive parenting. He said infertility and absence of a child constantly haunted them and almost cost their marriage. Despite the turbulent stage of their marriage, Kenjie and wife, Stephanie, found support from each other. The coming of their daughter "Rain" in their lives revived joy and enthusiasm in their home as would-be parents to a child they have longed for.

The couple was among the hundreds of attendees of the adoption forum during the celebration of the National Adoption Consciousness Week that the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office (FO) V conducted in February 2015 at the Population Commission (POPCOM) FO V in Legazpi City. The activity was intended for couples who have adopted children to get together and share their experiences, challenges and joys of parenting an adoptive child.

The theme "*Legal na Ampon Ako: Anak na Totoo*" left a message that there should be no distinction between parenting adopted children and rearing biological children as the law accords them equal rights. Adoptive parents were reminded that direct placement of children for adoption must be presented and couples must not allow themselves to receive children through independent placement only to later legalize the child's adoption.

The couple opined that adoptive parents like them were initially anxious in telling adoption to the adoptive child and uncertain how the latter would react. "*However, it is a must that children should know their backgrounds and that the adoptive parents must be prepared to handle possible issues relative to the disclosure,*" Kenjie said. "*Trust is important.*"

The forum stressed that it is crucial to build an honest and strong relationship between the adopted child and the adoptive parents. "*Adoptive parents are encouraged to tell about adoption as early as possible to condition the child about his background so that in the course of his/her growing up, the child is able to live in an environment where love and security is fostered,*" one speaker said.

Hearing the thoughts and perceptions of adoptive parents proved to be heartwarming. Another young adoptive couple expressed their happiness in having a baby girl in their life. She considered her a blessing, a realization of their fondest dream. "*We will ensure that she is truly loved and be provided with security blanket that will protect her from any threat or being abandoned again.*"

While there is so much joy in adoptive parenting, issues on adoption procedures and court fees were some issues raised by the adoptive couples in the forum. They asked DSWD to shorten and ease the adoption process. They also sought the assistance of the Department to help lobby with concern agencies to reduce the adoption fee.

The DSWD has always emphasized that adoptive parents can be strong support among themselves. The Department assures them that it is always ready and available for support in their journey as adoptive families. Way forward in the realm of adoption is the building of support groups by organizing the adoptive couples and registering them to assume a legal personality to become DSWD's partners in alternative parental care and advocacy.

# In defense of children

*Taking custody of minors is a learning experience not only for me but for BCPC as well. There is a need to strengthen the organization and functionality of the Local Council for the Protection of Children.*

On June 25, 2014, seven minors were reported to be involved in a gang rape of a thirteen-year-old girl. The four boys, all fifteen years old were released by the court to the DSWD's Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth (RRCY) in Sorsogon City for necessary intervention program while the rest of the boys who were eleven, thirteen and fourteen years of age were turned over to the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) of Barangay M. Roxas.

Since there was no facility in the area where the children could stay, Barangay Captain Fernando Gulpo took the responsibility of taking care of the boys. When asked why he volunteered to take custody of the children, the Barangay Captain said that it was his responsibility to take care of them being the chair of the BCPC. Likewise, the children needed to be helped and given necessary care and attention, he said.

Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Memorandum Circular dated August 21, 2008, encourages local government units (LGUs) to organize the Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC). This is pursuant to Republic Act 4881, or an act creating a Local Council for the Protection of Children. In reality, not all the LGUs have an organized LCPC or BCPC. If there was an existing council, it is either there as community structure or non-operational.

Barangay M. Roxas is one of the two barangays in Bulan, Sorsogon with functional BCPC; the other one is Zone 7.

Barangay Captain Gulpo proudly shared that the children were not treated as offenders but like his own children. The boys together with his family would hear

mass on Sundays and make sure to visit and talk to the children's parents to discuss the minors concerns. "*Ipinapaliwanag ko rin sa mga magulang ng mga bata na dapat kami ay magtulungan para sa ikabubuti ng mga bata* (I also explained to the parents that we need to help each other for the sake of the children)," he said.

Gulpo and his family knew that close supervision was needed especially that the boys were all in school. The minors were provided separate shelter in the residence compound of the Barangay Captain. Rules and regulations were set. As they woke up in the morning, they had to fix their beddings, clean their surrounding, and wash the dishes before going to school. A curfew was also set. At eight o' clock in the evening, the three boys would have gone to bed already. Gulpo himself supervised their studies. As intervention given by the Barangay Captain, backyard gardening became the boys' responsibility. Part of the produce was given to their respective parents and some for their consumption.

Barangay Captain Gulpo said that the thrust of his present administration is for the welfare of children and family. He wanted to see the children particularly in his community to be safe from harm, free from abuses --- and that no children should be left behind.

In Barangay 7, Barangay Captain Rey Lorilla joined Barangay Captain Gulpo in his advocacy efforts against drug and child abuse. "*I want Barangay 7 to be a drug free and a child abuse free community,*" Lorilla said.

The two Barangay Chief Executives regularly coordinate with the social workers and other concerned agencies to discuss child welfare concerns during community assemblies. They also have regular BCPC meetings in their respective barangays. The two leaders said that if there were minors who committed petty crimes, they would not only talk to the offenders, but an open dialogue with the parents was done.

In August 2015, the three minors were turned over to their respective parents but with continuous monitoring from the Barangay Captain and a counseling session with their parents.

"*Taking custody of minors is a learning experience not only for me but for BCPC as well. There is a need to strengthen the organization and functionality of the Local Council for the Protection of Children,*" Gulpo said.

Barangay Captains Lorilla and Gulpo vowed to help promote the functionality of the LCPC in their municipalities - and together with the minors who were under his custody - be active advocates for the welfare of children. They have always envisioned the municipality of Bulan, Sorsogon to be drug free and child abuse free.



CHAPTER 9

# OUT OF THE SHADOWS

“I learned a lot of things at the center. I underwent skills training, aside from the many seminars on values education. I learned everything I needed to learn to re-enter the community.”

**From CICL to a valiant soldier**

An enlisted member of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) sat vigilantly on top of one of the surveillance towers at Camp Martin Peralta in Jamindan, Capiz. His watchful eyes made sure his camp and battalion were safe from destabilizing forces that may lurk in the surroundings.

Technical Sergeant Peter, unknown to his comrades in the Philippine Army, was one among the many who was given a fresh lease of life under the principles of restorative justice for Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) as embodied in Republic Act 9344 or the Juvenile Justice Welfare Act. Peter was 17 years old when he was charged of murder at the Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 14-Family Court in Roxas City. He could not be imprisoned as a minor.

The Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC) is the policy-making, coordinating and monitoring body that promotes and protects the rights of children at risk and children in conflict with the law under a restorative justice and welfare system.

He was instead ordered to undergo rehabilitation at the Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth (RRCY), a center managed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in 2005.

That marked the start of his reform.

At the Center, he was provided with various therapeutic programs such as character - building sessions, life skills training, psychotherapy sessions, and developmental activities. He also had formal education.

Due to his good performance, he was given incentive to be one of the participants of the Pag-asa Youth Association of the Philippines (PYAP) Life Skills Encampment in Tangalan, Aklan representing CICLs. Since he earned the trust of the Center staff, he was enrolled at Guimaras State College taking up Bachelor of Science in Automotive Mechanic.

His case was dismissed in 2006.

When he was discharged, under the custody of a social worker at DSWD Field Office (FO) VI in San Miguel, Jordan, Guimaras, he was able to finish college with support from his legal custodians and his biological parents in Roxas City.

Every weekend, he would engage in making handicrafts where he earned P1,800 to support himself and his family. After he graduated from college, he went home to Roxas City to be with his parents.

A year after, he joined the Philippine Army.

To this day, he acknowledges with full gratitude the second chance provided by Republic Act (R.A.) 9344 and the efforts of the Center staff who once acted as his surrogate parents. He also expresses his gratitude to the social worker who took care of him after he was discharged from the Center.

Peter is a dedicated soldier, husband and father. He religiously attends to the needs of his family. He makes sure to communicate frequently with them despite being away for an assignment.

**A changed man**

“Manuelito” thought his life was over at twelve years old. At such a tender age, he had already found himself in conflict with

the law. Military personnel caught him in possession of illegal firearms along with other members of a militant organization.

The eldest in a brood of four, Manuelito and his siblings were born in Compostela Valley, Davao del Norte. His family moved to Sagbayan, Bohol, where his father found work at a bottling company. The town is notoriously known for intensive insurgency activities by militant groups.

A friend invited Manuelito to a “lecture” one day, and this first meeting was followed by another, then another. The meetings revolved around hating the government for graft and corruption and its incompetence in delivering basic social services to the poor. Soon, he was lured to fully pledge his support to the group’s endeavors. “We didn’t know that one of our colleagues had tipped the military forces about our operation that night,” he said.

One night, he was arrested along with two other members. Because he was a minor, he was taken to RRCY in Cebu.

At the Center, he was seen as an introverted young man, far different from the other boys. He was a quick learner though and never engaged in any form of hostility towards his fellow residents. “I learned a lot of things at the Center. I underwent skills training, aside from the many seminars on values education. I learned everything I needed to learn to re-enter the community,” he said

With constant counseling and guidance, he went through the Center’s various programs administered by an interdisciplinary team composed of a social worker, a psychologist, and in some instances, a psychiatrist.

After three years of stay in RRCY, his last houseparent offered to act as his foster parent. His re-entry into the real world made Manuelito apprehensive that people might not accept him.

But Manuelito eventually overcame these difficulties and successfully re-entered society. Soon he was being regarded as a regular teenager, free from the shackles of his past.

“It’s hard not to trust Manuelito. He is such a nice person, very hardworking. I can trust him totally even when he’s all alone at home. Besides, my children are now grown-ups. We treat him like a family member now,” said Nida, his foster mother.

Many years after he was caught, Manuelito is now a fine young gentleman.

“I regret everything that happened in my past. But, looking back, I wouldn’t have reached this far if it weren’t for my past. I learned so many things about the experience. It paved the way for me to build the life that I have now.”

**From wayward to productive**

“Rafael” arrived at the BK-RESToRe Youth Home in 2009. He was a leader of a gang and rarely went home to his mother. He used prohibited drugs and committed acts that brought him to a youth detention center.

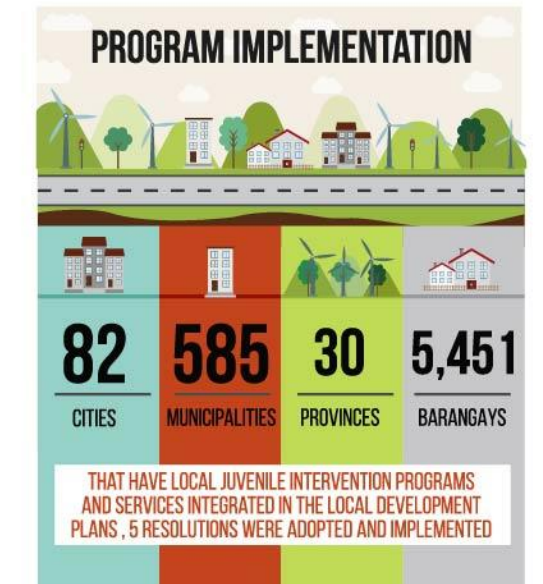
At the beginning of his stay, he was a bit short-tempered and sensitive to comments at the start. Soon he became participative. Eventually, he became a brother to his fellow youth in BK-RESToRe and many of them started liking him. He became more responsive and would willingly sympathize with the distress of others.

One volunteer from an international company supported Rafael and sent him back to school. He attended special

reading and writing classes. He finished courses on cooking and haircutting at the Manila Manpower Development Center (MMDC).

After graduating, he joined a team of student-haircutters in medical missions and extended his services as a barber to the small boys in ERDA-TuKLasan Center in San Juan in Manila. He also worked for ERDA - Livelihood Entrepreneurship Education (E-LEE), a fishball cart business. His hard work paid off when he got recommendations to work for a restaurant serving noodles and dumplings in Manila.

Rafael now eighteen years old, lives again with his family and works at a 7-11 Convenience Store in Blumentritt, Manila together with other ERDA youth.





## CHAPTER 10

“*Educate yourself with information about your background, with an open mind to accept what you will learn. Always facilitate a dialogue about what you will discover, and find ways in achieving solutions, rather than focusing on issues and problems.*”

# A journey back home

For an adopted child like James Beni Wilson, courage was all he needed to overcome his deep-seated fear of knowing his past.

As a baby, Beni, as he is fondly called by his friends, was raised in the United States of America (USA) but decided to embark on a journey to find his identity. “As I grew up in a foreign country, I started to see the difference between myself and the community. I felt that I didn’t belong,” he said.

Growing up, kids in his neighborhood would say a lot of nasty words about his physical appearance, the color of his skin specifically. But he tried hard to live a normal life. He knew that deep in his heart, he needed to discover himself.

As he became curious, he began to search for answers. He even made a video documentary of his journey titled, “*Binitay: A Journey of an Adoptee*”.

### Tracing his roots

When Beni turned 18, he contacted the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in Central Visayas to help him locate and meet his biological parents and relatives.

After receiving confirmation from DSWD, Beni returned in August 2013 to his birthplace and started gathering important details of his missing past. It was his first time to set foot in his hometown since he was adopted. During his stay, he found out that his second name, “*Beni*,” is a shortened Visayan word for “*binitay*,” which means “*hanged*” in English.

He was given that name because he was allegedly found hanging on a banana tree when he was still a baby by a woman named Elizabeth Ochia. Elizabeth surrendered him to the custody of the local Social Welfare and Development Office in Tabogon, northeast of Cebu.

To James’s surprise, however, a twist in his story would be revealed later.

James finally learned that Elizabeth, the woman who allegedly found him, was his biological mother and that he was christened Isagani Gulina Ochia by his biological family. “Reading my case study report from the DSWD has made me wonder how could a mother abandon her child,” said James.

### Healing the wounds of the past

It took him a month to process the information emotionally and psychologically before he realized that there must have been a reason why he was abandoned by his mother. He eventually forgave his mother and accepted his fate.

James never had a chance to talk to Elizabeth as she died of liver cirrhosis four months before he arrived in

the Philippines. But his relatives told him about their family’s situation back then and how hard it was for his mother Elizabeth to give him up. In fact, his biological family tried to get him back but it was too late as Beni had already been adopted by an American couple from Michigan through inter-country adoption.

Inter-country adoption refers to the process where a Filipino child is legally adopted by a foreigner or a Filipino citizen permanently residing abroad where the petition for adoption is filed. It is a step taken when domestic adoption is not immediately possible, which is undertaken through the Inter-country Adoption Board (ICAB), an attached agency of DSWD.

ICAB is the Central Authority of the Philippines that carries out the provisions of RA 8403 or the Inter-country Adoption Act of 1995. To date, there were 201 new adoption applications assessed of which 163 were approved; 156 Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs) were matched and 121 accepted the referral; 231 new cases of children were given ICA clearance by the DSWD; 297 children were given ICA clearance by the DSWD; 297 children were awaiting matching during the semester, 176 or 59% children were matched and accepted, and 186 were entrusted to their PAPs.

### Helping fellow adoptees

In April 2015, Beni made his second visit to the Philippines. Unlike his first visit, this time Beni admitted, he had more time to bond with his biological family. By constantly communicating with his immediate family and relatives, he learned more things about himself. Questions about his true identity that kept haunting him for a long time were gradually answered.

James Beni would advise his fellow adoptees to learn more about themselves. He added, “*Educate yourself with information about your background, with an open mind to accept what you will learn. Always facilitate a dialogue about what you will discover, and find ways in achieving solutions, rather than focusing on issues and problems.*”

To date, Beni is in the USA. He is a camp counselor for Filipino Heritage Camp for Filipino Adoptees in Colorado. Through this program, he is able to interact with other Filipino adoptees and help them by sharing his experiences. He has a full-time job at Starbucks and plans to take up a course in social work at Arizona State University via online.

James has never been content in his life than today. His courage did not fail him. He had made the painful decision of facing his past, accepting it, and moving on. Leaving that behind him, he can now focus on the present with the goal of achieving a better future with his loving adoptive parents, newfound relatives, and a vocation in helping fellow adoptees come to terms with themselves.

# From housewife to teacher

*Their voices are equally important to us. We will not only listen to their stories, but we will also make sure that their recommendations are put to action to ensure that children are part of inclusive growth.*

It took Aileen Fernandez-Desamparado fifteen years to complete her college degree. As a student, she was neither lazy nor troubled. The main reason was her family at those times was not financially capable in sending her to a university.

Understanding her family's situation, Aileen worked instead and eventually met her husband Abner with whom she has two children, Airen and Ann Jela. When she got married, Aileen decided to become a housewife and devote her time to her children and their small farm.

Airen and Ann Jela are monitored by the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, "if not because of the help we get from Pantawid Pamilya I wouldn't be where I am today," said Aileen, 31, a parent leader of Barangay Baod, Bantayan, Cebu. who passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers.

Aileen graduated magna cum laude at Madridejos Community College (MCC) in March 2015. She reviewed before taking the examination which equally divided her time as a mother, wife and student. Her tenacity paid off as she passed the licensure test.

Aileen disclosed that the financial grant she received from the program helped her make both ends meet. This also made her and husband Abner save some extra money that she would later use to enrol in a community college.

The mother of two narrated that her enrolment in college was unplanned although she had always dreamed of going back to school.

"I was accompanying my younger sister Maeziel to enrol at MCC when I happened to ask Ms. Rowena Batasin, teacher cum cashier if married women like me are allowed to enrol, when she answered yes, I immediately informed my husband about it," she quipped with a big smile.

Abner who worked at St. Peters as sales agent did not hesitate to support her wife's decision. "Her dream is also my dream and I support her because finishing her studies will also bring pride to our family and hopefully a better future for our children," he said.

When Aileen took the teachers' board, the couple agreed that Abner would do all the house chores so that Aileen could focus on her studies. To return the gesture, she studied hard which resulted to graduating on top of her class.

Aileen also said that her being a parent leader of Pantawid Pamilya helped build her confidence.

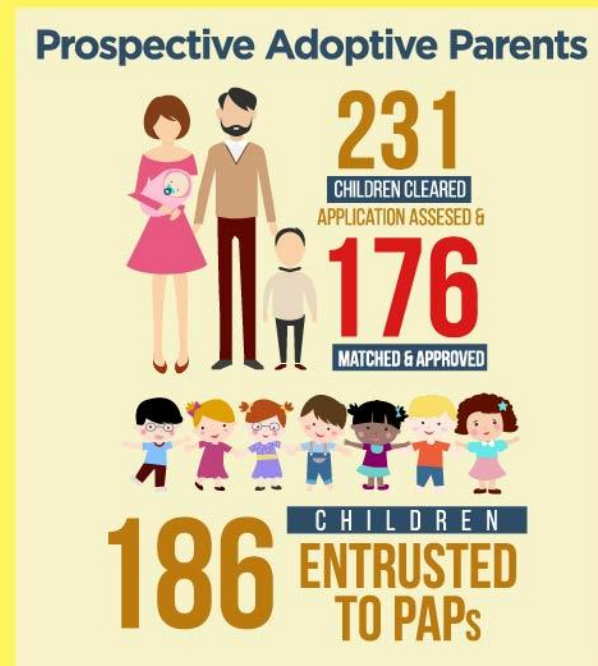
"During Family Development Session, different topics are being taught like how to become a good leader and citizen, responsible parenting, family planning and disaster preparedness, these topics have greatly helped me and my family as we were also survivors of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013," she added. The Desamparado house was among the thousands damaged in Bantayan Island when the typhoon made its second landfall.

Aileen on the other hand, was saddened by the criticisms hurled against Pantawid Pamilya as the program, for her, has helped and continues to help so many families in their community.

"When the typhoon badly hit us most of us lost our farms and shattered our small income, but because we are beneficiaries of the program we were able to somehow survive and continue sending our kids to school," she recalled. She hopes that the program will be sustained in order to help more struggling families who need it.

Aileen is currently enrolled in a vocational course to add to her credentials while waiting for the teachers' ranking. She hopes to teach in a public school someday. She is excited to take her oath as a licensed teacher in December this year.

The Desamparados take pride in being among the 250,431 active partner-beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program in Central Visayas.



# INDOMITABLE and Inspiring

*Their voices are equally important to us. We will not only listen to their stories, but we will also make sure that their recommendations are put to action to ensure that children are part of inclusive growth.*

Despite his small frame, eleven-year-old Jake Lere Boyles was the epitome of confidence during the Araw ng Kabataan celebration on November 21 last year. He bested sixteen other children from different regions nationwide when he was declared the winner of the National Search for Pantawid Pamilya Exemplary Child.

He received his award from Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Corazon Juliano-Soliman. On its fourth year, the search identified young leaders who served as role models for other Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries. It was the highlight of the National Children's Congress, a gathering of regional winners organized by the DSWD.

Secretary Soliman commended the exemplary children and urged them to continue being good examples to the youth. She pointed out that the gathering of exemplary children in the Congress was a recognition of their role in development. "Their voices are equally important to us. We will not only listen to their stories, but we will also make sure that their recommendations are put to action to ensure that children are part of inclusive growth," she said.

Jake stood out among the nominees for his excellent leadership skills and talent. During the Congress, he was among the most active participants, expressing his opinion on various issues that affect the children's sector. He gained the admiration of his co-participants when he showcased his talent in rap music using an original piece about his desire to end poverty. He was also the main character of the creative group presentation that depicted how Pantawid Pamilya is fulfilling children's aspirations in life.

### Poverty not a hindrance

Jake is the fourth of the seven children of Bartolome, a fisher and Armida, a housewife from Tigdaranao, Tarangan in Samar.

According to Armida, Jake is a responsible and obedient child who helps in household chores.

She recalled how caring and loving he is, often asking them if they have eaten already and offering them food. He also helps his parents take care of his siblings. He would tutor them on their assignments particularly in math and science, and help them in their projects.

Four-year-old sister Jayde said that Jake would often buy her bread as *pasalubong* (take home present) when he goes home from school.



Jake said that his schooling was on and off due to poverty. *"Kulang po ang kita ng tatay ko sa pangangisda para matugunan lahat ng aming pangangailangan tulad ng pamasahe araw-araw at baon (My father's earnings from fishing are not enough for our needs such as daily transportation and food),"* he said.

He had to ride a boat from his island barangay to reach Tarangnan National High School where he is in first year high school. It was even more difficult to go to school during *Habagat* (southwest monsoon) season when waves are dangerously huge. But he has always been determined to attend classes regularly.

#### Pantawid is a blessing

Things changed when his family became one of the 4.4 million partner-beneficiaries nationwide of the Pantawid Pamilya.

Through the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), Jake and his siblings are able to go to school every day without having to worry about transportation and school allowance. His parents considered this a blessing.

For Jake, education is important in achieving his dream of becoming a chef or a scientist to have a better life someday.

*"Akos ko an pagbabago kay pursigido ako magmaupay it akon kinabubuwason para ha akon pamilya pati na gihap han akon komunidad (I can make a positive change because I am determined to have a better future for my family and the entire community),"* Jake said.

This was evident in his participation in different science contests and other competitions. He bagged two awards in Science Olympics: First Place in Large Barge and Water Rocket, Second Place in Water Transportation in 2014, and First Place in Water Transportation in 2015. He graduated class valedictorian in 2014.

Ako may siday  
Siday na haliputay  
Na ipapabati ha iyo  
Unta kamo malipay.

Usa la ako na bata  
Bata na islahanon  
Malipayon, buotan  
Ngan makisasangkayon.

Ha akon kinabuhi  
hingyap an pagaram  
agud makaangbit  
maupay na hibaruonan  
Ngan makatalwas man  
hini na kakurian.

Lugaring kay kablas  
Waray kalungganayan

Sobra an pag-antus  
Samtang nageskwela  
An balon gintitipigan pa  
Panisnak, project, panbayad sa eskwela  
Ngan an tarabukon isla pa.

Ini nga programa  
Pantawid Pamilya  
An ira bulig  
ha aton pagsuporta.

An sadang ha aton ginhimo nira  
ngan ayaw gad man liwat  
tanang iasa.

Yana nabatian an tunog han akon  
dughan  
an yakan han kasingkasing  
pitik han kalipayan  
akon hinihingyap  
an kauswagan  
agud maglakaton ha tadong na dalan.

I have a poem  
A short poem  
I will recite to you  
Hope you will be delighted.

I am only a child  
A child from an island  
Happy, kind  
And friendly.

In my life  
Desire is to study  
to obtain  
good learnings  
To be saved  
from this hardship.

But I am poor  
No privileges.

Persisting too hard  
While studying  
have to save my allowance  
for snack, project, school fees  
And even crossing an island.

This program  
Pantawid Pamilya  
their role  
is to support us.

They did everything for us  
but let us not  
depend everything on them.

Now you've heard the beat of  
my heart  
what my heart says  
leap of joy  
my aspiration  
is prosperity  
To walk on an upright path.



## PNoy proud of Pantawid high school graduates

*"Walang duda, kayo ang gumawa ng pagbabago at kayo rin ang magpapatuloy nito (No doubt, you created change and you also will continue it)."*

This was the inspiring message of President Benigno S. Aquino III to the more than 10,000 student-beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program who graduated from high school.

President Aquino was the keynote speaker in the post-graduation ceremony organized by the DSWD at the Smart Araneta Coliseum.

With the theme *"Pagtatapos Ninyo, Tagumpay ng Pilipino"*, the event was held to celebrate the initial harvest of Pantawid Pamilya.

In 2013, the DSWD expanded the coverage of the program to include the 15 to 18 age bracket to ensure that the children-beneficiaries will graduate from high school and have a higher rate of employability.

The President added, the graduates are the proof of Pantawid Pamilya's achievements. *"Kayong mga benepisyaryo ng*

*Pantawid Pamilya ang konkretong patunay na nakamit natin, at naisip ko na sulit ang lahat ng pagod. Lalong tumibay ang aking paninindigan na ang Filipino is worth fighting for (You as beneficiaries are the concrete proof of our achievement. I think the hard work is all worth it. My conviction has become stronger),"* he said.

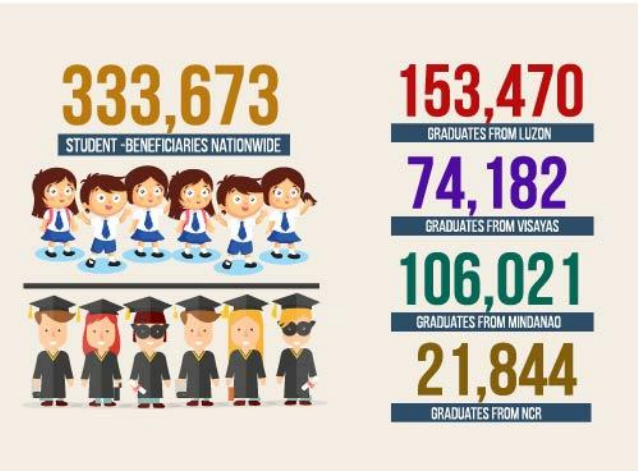
President Aquino also commended graduates with honors led by David Louie Manansala who graduated valedictorian from the Maligaya High School in Novaliches.

*"Ang kahirapan ay hindi sapat na hadlang bagkus ito ang ating gawing inspirasyon upang abutin ang mga pangarap (Poverty is not enough impediment, but we should make this an inspiration in order to reach our dreams),"* said David in his valedictory speech. *"Ang makapag-aral sa tulong ng Pantawid Pamilya ay isang magandang pagkakataon at hindi ko ito sasayangin (To be able to study with the help of Pantawid Pamilya is one good opportunity and I will not waste this)."*

Secretary Corazon Juliano-Soliman said that David, the other honor students, and the rest of the graduates are the reason the government continues to implement Pantawid Pamilya in spite of the criticisms.

*"The partner-beneficiaries are proof that the program is not a dole-out but an investment for the youth, giving them a fighting chance to improve their lives,"* she said during the press conference.

David passed the University of the Philippines College Admission Test (UPCAT) and will take up Civil Engineering at Los Baños campus.



“  
Kahit ganito kami, may silbi din pala kami.  
”

**Physical disability no match to inner strength**

**T**ake it from Nora Aminuddin, someone people must take inspiration from, not because of how much she has done but because of what she has become after all her struggles in life. For her, success does not require an able body; it only needs determination to embrace change despite the physical limitations.

Nora is but an ordinary civilian who works hard day and night for a living in the busy street of Zamboanga City's downtown. She is left with two little children, ages two and three to feed, after her eldest married. She has polio.

The ninth of September marked the start of the bloody siege that caused the displacement of more than a hundred thousand people.

It was at two o'clock in the morning when the city was in chaos and Nora, who was at the downtown that moment was informed to go somewhere else as she could not go back to her home in Talon-Talon where she left her children. It was simply impossible to see her kids at that time.

Seeing more soldiers than civilians in the wide streets of the city, Nora panicked. "Hindi ko na alam kung saan ako pupunta kasi gyera na (I do not know where to go because there is war)," she said. The police told her to leave and look for a safer place to hide as she was bent on selling more of her goods. "Hindi po ako pwedeng umalis kasi hihintayin ko ang mga anak ko (I cannot leave because I will wait for my children)," she added.

But she insisted. "Kung magtatago po ba ako makikita po ba ako ng mga anak ko? (Will my children see me if I hide)," she asked the officer as she was forced to go. The authorities even called her family but could hardly connect to them. As she was about to go, her children came all the way from their home in Talon-Talon, except the eldest who was in Sta. Catalina.

They were brought to the Joaquin F. Enriquez Memorial Sports Complex that was big enough to hold a huge number of people. They belonged to the first batch of evacuees in the complex. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) provided the evacuees with food and other forms of assistance to help them in their ordeal.

Nora, considered as a Person with Disability (PWD) was ably assisted by social workers to DSWD's Area Vocational Rehabilitation Center (AVRC) after a month of taking refuge in the grandstand. The AVRC provided rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities. At the Center, she learned sign language to communicate better with the deaf, to cooperate and connect with fellow PWDs, to protect themselves, and to try handiwork. It boosted her self-esteem despite her physical impairment.



CHAPTER 12

**A tale of two**



"Kaya tumatag ang loob namin. Kahit ganito pala kami, may silbi din pala kami (That's why our faith became firm. Despite our condition, we have worth)," Nora said with joy and confidence. When she graduated after a year of skills training at the Center, she promised herself to have a home-based livelihood so she could keep close watch of her children. "Kahit sa bahay lang ako, pwede kong mabantayan ang maliit kong anak. Takot na rin ako dahil sa nangyari dati (Even though I'm at home, it is possible to guard my kids. I fear for what happened in the past)."

Nora is now a learned and contented individual who could smile and laugh after she managed to get back on her feet with the help of AVRC and DSWD, which she said have opened doors to new beginnings that gave impact in her future. She said with a firm voice, "Nagpapasalamat ako sa kanila kasi dahil sa kanila nabago ang buhay ko. Kahit papano tumatag ang loob ko. Dati nagtatago lang kami at nahihiya sa mga taong walang kapansanan, ngayon kahit pagtawanan kami, hindi na kami mahihiya dahil mayroon kami na wala sila (I thank them because through them, my life changed. I became strong. We used to hide and shy away from people who do not have disabilities. Even if they make fun of us now, we will not be ashamed because we possess things that they do not have)."

**Triumphant over disability**

Ashamed, dependent, and pessimistic. These are how Eric described himself when he was stricken by poliomyelitis growing up. While her four other siblings were living a normal life, Eric was struggling with his condition. He felt he was constrained by his disability and so he confined himself at home for many years.

"Ta tiene gat iyo huya antes sale na casa. No quierre iyo mira conmigo mga hente, kay como ta ri sila conmigo o ta tiene sila con migo lastima. So hinde gat yo ta sale na casa (I was too ashamed to leave our house before. I didn't want people to see me because they might just laugh at me or pity me, that's why I would never leave the house)," Eric quipped.

Eric Pioquint was 17 when he was first visited by social workers and invited him to join the AVRC. Eric felt guilt when he turned down the offer several times. But the social workers persisted, going back to their house every now and then to nudge him.

"Mga sinco beses gaha kel sila ya bira kumigo. Bien determinado gat tamen sila. Yan encourage gat sila conmigo cay man join iyo aqui na AVRC. Amo kel, cuando ya bisita yo aqui, otro gat iyo ya sinti cuando ya mira ya iyo el otro mga PWDs. Como hinde yo kaya mira canila cay como ta mira yo de miyo cuerpo canila. So nohay gat yo sigi (The social workers had to come to our house for five times. They were very persistent. They encouraged me to join the AVRC. So when I tried visiting the Center, I felt indifferent. I didn't want to see the other PWDs like me because I could see myself in them. So I refused to join them)," Eric cheerfully narrated.

While in self-imposed confinement, Eric constantly dreamt of finding his self-worth. He didn't know what to do until his father encouraged him to enrol at the Center. Eric halfheartedly entered AVRC. Gradually he was able to adjust and accept his condition, realizing that there was no reason

to sulk and lock himself up as there were people who were ready to accept and understand his situation.

*“Despues cuanto dia, ya accepta ya yo. Grande ayuda cae el maga social workers ta entende sila el di amun sitwasyon. Ta habla sila canamun cae hinde dapat tiene huya cae hente tamen kame, muchu lang kame syempre cosa puede hace maskin PWD kami (I eventually accepted my condition. The social workers were a big help because they understand our situation. They would tell us that we shouldn't feel ashamed because we are still humans and that we are still capable to do many things despite our disability)”.*

In 2007, he became a full-time enrollee at AVRC, particularly in commercial arts and crafts where students were trained to design and make different products such as bags, slippers, tissue holders, and the like. After nine months, Eric and the other differently-abled clients at the Center graduated with a course on computer technology, agriculture and therapeutic massage for the blinds, among others.

Immediately after graduation, he was absorbed by the DSWD's Rehabilitation Sheltered Workshop Program, a non-residential business-work oriented facility that provides sheltered employment opportunities to PWDs.

*“Una, hinde pa gat iyo bien hilig ese man tahi-tahi. Como yan enjoy lang gat iyo conele cay talya de mio mga barkada, pirmi kame huntu. Pero cuando ya conose iyo miyo mujer, ya pensa yo nesesita ya gat yo sen para hace bibi canila. So aquel, ya man seryoso ya iyo (At first, it didn't occur as a passion to me. I was just so happy that I got to be with my friends most of the time. Then when I met my wife, I felt like I really had to earn regularly for our family. That's when I took my work seriously),”* the twenty-seven-year old disclosed.

For every job order, he earned between P3,000 to P4,000 that became his family's primary source of living. This has given him the confidence and the ability to support his family.

*“Grande ayuda gayot kumigo el Sheltered cay porcausa con este, ya puede yo hace bibi familia, gendeh yay o ta depende na demio mayors. Ya puede pa kame planta casa hinay-hinay (The Rehabilitation Sheltered Workshop of DSWD is really a big help to me because I was able to support my own family that I no longer depend on my parents. I was even able to build our own house),”* Eric proudly shared.

With economic independence, came respect from people around him because of his optimism and determination to walk the extra mile.

Currently, the AVRC is training 54 clients in 10 different courses. There have been more or less 70 PWDs who were given employment, sustainable livelihood, and entrepreneurial activities since 2014.

National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA) is the government's focal agency on disability, continued to lead in promoting “Disability-Inclusive Development.”

To date NCDA has worked for the adoption of responsive policy agenda for persons with disability and improve capacity of intermediaries or stakeholders to respond to the needs of PWD's. Moreover, it focused on increasing functionalities of Regional Councils and Local Government

Units in line with the Strategic Goal three of the Department; close collaboration with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asian and the Pacific (ESCAP) was established regarding the Joint Disability Data Project; reviewed and passed two resolutions on policies directly affecting PWDs; developed database or system on disability related information by collecting disability-related data; collaborated with the DOH, organization of PWDs, representatives from the academe and wheelchair service providers on the results of the wheelchair research conducted by United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Jhpiego and the Institute of Health Policy Development Studies.



CHAPTER 13

# FROM MALNOURISHED to Outstanding



“  
*Kaya nako ang kausaban, ug magsugod kini sa akong  
 pamilya pinaagi sa pagkaon nga among ginahatag para sa  
 among mga bata.*”

**A** mother in Cagayan de Oro City claimed her child has become mentally and physically alert after undergoing supplementary feeding by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in Northern Mindanao.

Lota Janiola, 42 of West Kolambog, Lapasa is proud that her son, John Manny, 5, received several awards from West Kolambog Day Care Center during recognition day. The Janiola family is a Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program partner-beneficiary under Set 5 B.

John Manny went on to be awarded best in reading, most friendly and most punctual. Lota attributed the achievements of her son to good nutrition he acquired from regular feeding program of DSWD, implemented in coordination with the local government.

John Manny was one of several day care pupils in his village found to be underweight before the implementation of the Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP) in September 2013. He now weighs fifteen pounds from his previous weight of thirteen.

The SFP of West Kolambog, Lapasan provided variety of vegetables, fruits, and fish for day care pupils.

The now-nourished Janiola has also shifted his choice of favorite foods from hotdogs to vegetables and fruits since his mother became more cautious in preparing healthier foods for her family's consumption.

When asked why and how she has become conscious of the meals she served her family, Lota said she has seen the positive changes in her son's activities and performance in school because of good eating habits and decided to maintain the healthy lifestyle. *“Kaya nako ang kausaban, ug magsugod kini sa akong pamilya pinaagi sa pagkaon nga among ginahatag para sa among mga bata (I can handle change and it will start with my family through the food that we give our children),”* she said.

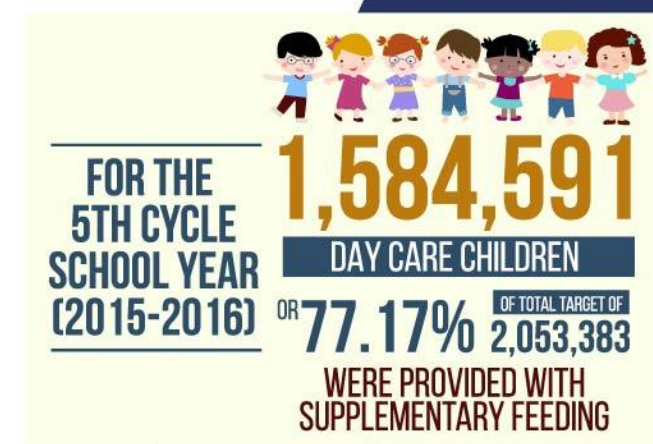
This supplementary program of DSWD aims to provide food, including locally processed foods, equivalent to one-third of the recommended energy in-take, and one-third of the recommended in-take of protein, iron, and vitamin A; improve knowledge, attitudes and practices of mothers and child caregivers as well as of other family members on key nutritional practices; monitor the growth of beneficiaries regularly; and refer beneficiaries to health care facilities as may be deemed necessary.

Targets of the program are: wasted infants who are six months to twenty-four months old or those with MUAC<115 mm, underweight pregnant women, wasted pre-school children who are thirty-six to seventy-one months old or those with MUAC<115 mm, underweight school-age children, and malnourished children discharged from health facilities.

Nutritionist Sheryl Ave, DSWD Northern Mindanao's SFP focal person, emphasized that proper nutrition is essential for building children's bodies. She said it is the energy used to grow a child's body to adulthood, the very fuel they need to get them from place to place, and learn as well.

*“Nutrients are the building blocks that grow muscle, support bone density, encourage proper cell development, support immune defense, and develop brain function – all the functions that are necessary to grow your child into a healthy, strong adult,”* she added.

Without proper nutrition, Ave said, the child will have difficulty learning in school, exhibit poor behavior, be sluggish, and have limited energy; or be hyperactive on the opposite end.



# From desperate to grateful

Maisarah Sarosong of Barangay San Miguel in Maramag, Bukidnon, has always been grateful for what the government has done to her and her family.

Coming from a poor family, the eighteen years old recalls that attending school was always a challenge for her mother who brought her up and her four siblings single-handedly. Her father died when they were young.

Although her mother could hardly make ends meet for their family, she was still able to attend college with the help of the Socialized Scholarship of Central Mindanao University which gave her a *“tuition privilege”*.

Since the scholarship did not cover miscellaneous fees required for a university student, she became desperate after finding out that she needed to pay for her financial obligation. *“Naguol gyud kay kinahanglan nako mabayaran akong utang sa eskwelahan para maka-take ko sa akong final exam (I was worried because I needed to pay the fees before I can take my final exam),”* Maisarah recalled.

Desperate to take her exam and complete her college degree, she sought assistance from the local government of Maramag and eventually received educational assistance under the UNLAD Kabataan Program.

UNLAD Kabataan Program, implemented by the Local Government Unit (LGU) with technical assistance from the DSWD, aims to provide developmental, remedial, and preventive services for out-of-school, marginalized, and disadvantaged youths. Under the Program, they shall also become members of the Pag-asa Youth Association of the Philippines (PYAP).

After her graduation, Maisarah was then hired by the LGU of Maramag as an administrative aide. With her income now, she is able to help her family. Her mother presently owns a *karinderia* (local eatery), which is their other source of income.

*“Without the government's help, I would have never finished school, nor would our family be able to have a stable income,”* Maisarah mused.



# WATER FOR PEACE

“Breaking the never-ending cycle of dispute is futile. The community will always suffer if the government, the armed rebels, and the community will not find common goals.”

**F**ormer rebel Virgilio Tengogue could not have asked for more.

*“Ang pagpagahum sa katawhan pinaagi sa pagsalmo diha sa mga proyekto mao ang kabag-ohan nga akong gihandum ug kini akong nakaplagan diha sa Kalahi-CIDSS (Having a vision of empowering communities through enhanced participation in their projects, Kalahi-CIDSS is the change that I longed for when I searched for reforms in the government),” he said.*

The construction of a P1,162,749 potable water system, a sub-project in Barangay Kingking in Pantukan, Compostela Valley through the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan—Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), has since changed Virgilio’s perspective on government’s sincerity.

*“The project, aside from providing access to clean and safe water to over twenty-six thousand residents, prevents insurgency and promotes peace in the area,” said Virgilio, now a Kalahi-CIDSS volunteer.*

Known to many as Kuya Chikee, Virgilio, 56, admitted he joined the armed rebel group New People’s Army (NPA) twenty-seven years ago after he experienced brutal extortion during the Marcos regime.

It was a turnaround for him in 2012 as he regained trust in the government and decided to be its staunch supporter when Kalahi-CIDSS came to his barangay.

### From conflict to peace

Barangay Kingking, a two-hour ride from Davao City, is one of the villages of Pantukan where NPA operates. Socio-economic development here was once stalled since government had a hard time delivering basic services to the community.

Virgilio said the people in the outskirts felt neglected and started to lose their trust in the government. *“Wala na maabot ang mga proyekto sa komunidad, mao nagtuo sila na gipasagdan na sila sa gobyerno (Projects did not reach the community. People thought the government abandoned them).”*

Virgilio took a leap of chance. *“Breaking the never-ending cycle of dispute is futile. The community will always suffer if the government, the armed rebels, and the community will not find common goals,”* he said.

He and the rest of the villagers united to become partners in building the potable water system sub-project in the barangay.

DSWD came to the barangay in 2012, ushering PAMANA Kalahi-CIDSS sub-projects such as multi-purpose pavement, school library, and drainage canal.

*“The people attended barangay assemblies organized by Kalahi-CIDSS area coordinating team. They underwent capacity building activities on how to effectively implement the potable water system sub-project,”* recounted Quillano Sabello, chair of Barangay Sub-Project Management Committee (BSPMC).

He said residents can now enjoy clean drinking water and a more stable water supply for all their household needs. For him, this transformed a lot of lives in the area.

*“We are thankful Kalahi-CIDSS granted us sub-projects like this. The villagers, especially children, will no longer walk miles to reach the nearest source of water,”* Sabello happily added.

*“I am truly grateful to the government for this project. Even if our community is far from the city, they attended to our needs and made sure we had enough to get by. I now believe that there’s hope in combatting poverty as long as we unite ourselves in helping our communities.”*

Virgilio and several residents definitely reaped the benefits from Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program and Sustainable Livelihood Program, two of the poverty-reduction programs of DSWD.

To date, Barangay Kingking has 5,163 Pantawid beneficiaries, 295 of whom are engaged in livelihood projects.

### Trust regained

*“PAMANA Kalahi-CIDSS supports peace-building efforts and addresses the needs of people including peace concerns,”* said Rhona Theresa Siojo, Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer.

Anthony Bacus, Barangay Kingking Kalahi-CIDSS community facilitator also said, PAMANA projects became the instrument for the community’s restored trust in the government. *“The community felt their importance because the government gave them the opportunity to lead the process of project implementation,”* he said.

The LGU of Pantukan shelled out a cash counterpart of P174,914 for the water sub-project that benefited 5,920 households.

Kalahi-CIDSS is a community-driven development project of the Philippine Government that aims to empower communities through enhanced participation in local governance and poverty - alleviation projects. PAMANA (PAMANA) is a Kalahi-CIDSS modality that aims to improve access of conflict-affected barangays (CABs) to quality basic social services and responsive, transparent and accountable local governments.

PAMANA Kalahi-CIDSS was able to fund a total of 2,886 sub-projects for 940,493 households. A total of 3,100 sub-projects or 80% are already completed, directly benefiting 820,147 households.

These projects include infrastructure projects, day care centers, health stations, birthing rooms, concrete pathways, mini wharf, tri-people centers, multi-purpose pavements, water system and installation of streetlights.

The scaling up of Kalahi-CIDSS into the national program eventually covered twenty-one municipalities in Region XI in 2015.



*We usually gathered and held our hearing in an open area. When the rain starts to pour or if it’s too humid, we stop the hearing and we would end up not settling the issues. As a datu, I implement justice and law to maintain peace and unity. We serve as judge and decision makers too.*

*It was never easy to balance everything, especially when there is no venue to settle our problems. When problems are not settled, tribal wars would erupt.*

*Through PAMANA Kalahi - CIDSS, the Ata-Manobo tribe underwent Participatory Situation Analysis (PSA) in which Datus and community residents were given the privilege to determine their problem. This was a leap of faith and a hope to our tribe. Through the Kalahi-CIDSS, the peace that we yearned for so long was getting closer to our reach. We decided to build an Ata-Manobo Libulongan Center (justice hall).*

*This center could help us in maintaining peace in our communities. Further, this would help boost our economy as livelihood activities will no longer be disrupted by the wars. Kalahi-CIDSS provided us more than just a ‘peace’ center. Above all, it helped mobilize indigenous people to become leaders and peace-makers in their own right.*

**Datu Jaime Panuyan, Assistant Mandatory Representative of the Ata-Manobo Tribe of Barangay Palma Gil, Talaingod, Davao Del Norte.**

# When hopes did not run dry

“Our lives have been changed here the moment our homes were energized and lighted.”



## Like fireflies that glow in the night

For many decades, the remote community of Kanulay in Sultan Kudarat lived in darkness, isolated from the rest of its towns. The yuletide season by far, has always been the loneliest; devoid of merry-making especially at night.

Today, Kanulay households are now enjoying electricity. Thanks to solar-home lights project of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), courtesy of one of its flagship poverty-reduction programs, Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan - A Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS).

Like the rays of sun, the solar home project brought smiles, a welcome development for the poor and far-flung community whose story of 'darkness to light' was waiting to be told.

Far from the reach of national power grid, the villagers have always regarded the absence of electricity as one major problem for a long time. To be able to go about their daily chores, people would rely on kerosene lamp and wood found to be very expensive for many families who struggled for their daily subsistence.

*“Sa isa kabulan, makagasto kami mga P150 asta P200 sa suga lang (We spent more or less between P150 and P200 for our lights),” said Non Togue, 67, a Manobo village leader, whose house was accidentally burned down because of unwanted kerosene light.*

He said there were those who practiced burning used old sacks and plastics to lit their houses in order for children to study and make their assignments at night, oblivious to the dangers to their health that would cause chronic lung diseases and other respiratory problems.

*“May ara sa amon sad to nga ginasanog ang saku para gamiton nga suga (Some of us here used and burned sacks to serve as lights),” Non added.*

These became things of the past when 103 Kanulay homes, mostly comprising indigenous peoples belonging to Manobo tribe, have lit their homes through solar panels, without having to worry about costs and adverse effects to health.

The solar home system was seen as the solution to the most pressing need of the community which was realized with the collaborative efforts of community volunteers, barangay and municipal officials, and DSWD staff, through a fund from World Bank amounting to P1.7 million.

### Let there be light

There is light even during brownout. And even when the whole town and province are experiencing power interruption and energy crisis, Kanulay stands proud as the only village that is lit up.

Located in the plateau of Bagumbayan mountains, the houses in Kanulay glow like fireflies at night when all other villages are silenced by total darkness. *“Madamu ang natingala kung ngaa may suga kami bisan brownout sa bilog munisipyo (Many wonder why we have always light while there are power interruptions in the whole town),” Togue exclaimed.*

With the source of energy coming from the sun, the village need not to worry about power interruptions or shortage, what with the energy crisis the province has always been experiencing.

Power has continued to change the way of life of the villagers. Togue, farmer himself, did not expect they would finally have light after so many years of groping in the dark.

Each time he saw the sun set with its deep purple and red hues fading as he ended his day, he would long for the day his village would have electricity. *“Sa edad ko, hindi na namo ngina expect nga makaabot pa diri ang kuryente tungod sa kalayo halin sa banwa (In my age, I never expected that our homes will be lighted because of its distance from the town),” Togue said.*

Instead of spending their hard-earned money to buy kerosene for their lamps, parents like her are now able to buy school needs of their school children and other basic home necessities. *“Makita mo ang pagbag-o sa kabuhi sang mga tao diri umpisa nga nagkasuga kami (Our lives here changed the moment our homes were energized and lighted),” Florentina said.*

For Jerwin Tiwan, 28, a Manobo father of two and chairperson of the sub-project management committee in the village, the solar-home system is a big help as it practically offers more livelihood opportunities for him and the rest of the villagers of Kanulay.

And no more quiet and dark homes during Christmas and New Year.

# The hands that rock the cradle

Silence belied the excitement of Yuda Prospero, 41, as she stood in the middle of a throng of people in the town's gymnasium on a gloomy Friday afternoon in October 2013, as an overly excited voice would eventually announce the winner of the Draw and Tell contest.

For some seconds, the place was drowned with noise and screams of people rooting for their contestants who would further compete at the provincial level.

Earlier that day, the contestants, all young learners, were told to draw their dreams and then explain their illustration to the judges and the audience.

Gillian, a curly-haired T'boli child from the village of Lamsalome in T'boli, South Cotabato, and a pupil of Yuda, drew a community bursting with colors and shapes with a school displayed prominently on her illustration. When she was asked about her drawing, everyone including her teacher, expected to hear about Gillian's dream of finishing her studies.

It turned out to be not self-serving.

*“Ito po ang iginuhit ko kasi ito ang pangarap ko na paaralan para sa aming guro, para sa aming lugar (What I drew is my dream school for my teacher, for our community),” she said. “Masikip, maliit at luma na kasi ang aming paaralan (Our school is cramped, small and old).”*

Teacher Yuda could barely hear her pupil's explanation as she was engulfed by her emotions and defeaned by noise. She bowed her head as her eyes welled up with tears. At that moment, she knew exactly what the learner's plea was, as she had the same dream for the past twenty-one years, the same number of years she has been serving as a daycare center teacher in Lamsalome. She knew about her dream of the community.





It was the same dream Teacher Yuda and the other residents of Lamsalome shared for as long as they could remember.

#### Sacrifice and determination

Nestled on a grassy plateau, Lamsalome is a remote village some 35 kilometers from the town proper of T'boli. Seventy percent of the villagers are T'boli while the rest are either Christians or Muslims.

Teacher Yuda started being a daycare teacher when she was 19 years old. For 21 years, her voice would echo atop the foggy place where the center sits, as she called her pupils.

Like her pupils, Teacher Yuda is a T'boli. She was born and raised in a large family whose father had four wives and twenty children, including her. Since the community was remote, families relied only on seasonal farming, without a fixed income. For most of them, education was a low priority, as parents would rather have their children help them in farming. Teacher Yuda's parents were illiterate; the only thing they knew was to scribble their signature.

After finishing high school, Yuda went back to her community and volunteered to teach young children in the village with the help of a local social welfare office. "Gusto ko i-share man ang ako gamay nga nabal an kag i-encourage ang mga T'boli parents nga pa-eskwelahon ang mga bata (I want to share my knowledge and to encourage parents to send their children to school)," Yuda explained.

Yuda had high hopes that education would be the main tool to combat poverty in the community so she did what she could to teach her pupils. She even conducted house-to-house dialogues to encourage parents to send their children to school.

Her journey as a teacher was not without difficulties.

"Tanan wala-wala lamesa, wala bangko, wala board, wala chalk pati mga bata, wala lapis kag papel (I did not have tables, chairs, boards, chalks. My learners do not have pencils and paper with them)," she recalled her first days as teacher. Her young learners would squat on the floor during classes.

Aside from the lack of supplies, Teacher Yuda and her pupils also had to content themselves with their daycare facilities or the of lack of them. For several years, classes were held in an abandoned dilapidated structure in a hilly part of the village. The pupils jostled for space during learning sessions.

"Mainit, masikip at madilim (Hot, cramped and dark)," Teacher Yuda said. "Sige ako pangbalay-balay para mag-enrol ang mga bata, pero wala kami mayo nga classroom. (I conducted house-to-house visits to get the children to enrol, but we did not have a good classroom to accommodate them)."

With increased enrolment because of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program which required school attendance, insufficient facilities also grew to be more challenging. Of her 30 learners, 23 were partner-beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilya. Gillian was one of them.

One day, she went on an educational tour with other daycare center teachers to visit accredited daycare centers across Mindanao. Though amazed, she was also swamped with self-pity when she returned home; she could only dream of those beautiful centers for her pupils. "Gina-isip ko, san o pa kaya ako maka-angkon sini kanami nga mga center (I can only imagine how I would be able to have these beautiful centers)," Teacher Yuda said.

Little did the teacher know that she and the residents of Barangay Lamsalome would be able to fulfill their dream in partnership with another DSWD program, Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS).

#### Most treasured award

In the fourth quarter of 2013, Lamsalome was identified as one of the communities that would receive a grant from Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) for the construction of an educational facility. The grant, which was coursed through Kalahi-CIDSS, was intended to support the education needs of poverty-affected communities.

"The Kalahi-CIDSS school and day care project, through DFAT, is one of the answers to the continuing significant increase of enrolment of pupils because of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, in which part of its conditionalities is to send school-aged children to school," said Bai Zorahayda Taha, DSWD Field Office (FO) XII Regional Director.

According to Taha, in Kalahi-CIDSS, development priorities are addressed through participatory, collective and inclusive decision-making. Furthermore, control over resources is put in the hands of the community.

Aside from technical and moral support, the local government were also provided financial counterpart to facilitate the construction of the project.

Lamsalome's villagers, meanwhile, worked together to construct the daycare center at a more prominent spot, on a hill in the community.

One of the first to express support for the Kalahi-CIDSS-DFAT project was none other than Larry Prospero, the husband of Teacher Yuda.

Having witnessed the difficulties and struggles of his wife in teaching young learners of the village for many years without a convenient classroom for learning, he readily accepted the challenge to take charge of a team of volunteers who would be implementing the community project. "Naluoy ko sa asawa ko makita nga nagapangabudlay adlaw-adlaw (I pitied my wife as I saw her daily struggles)," Larry said. He even advised her wife to find another job but Teacher Yuda could not afford to abandon the innocent young learners, especially her tribemates.

Teacher Yuda, could not contain her tears as she saw the community working together for their new daycare center. "May pagbag o nag id sa pagtan aw nila sa edukasyon. (There is change now in the way our community looks at education. It is now their priority)," she said.

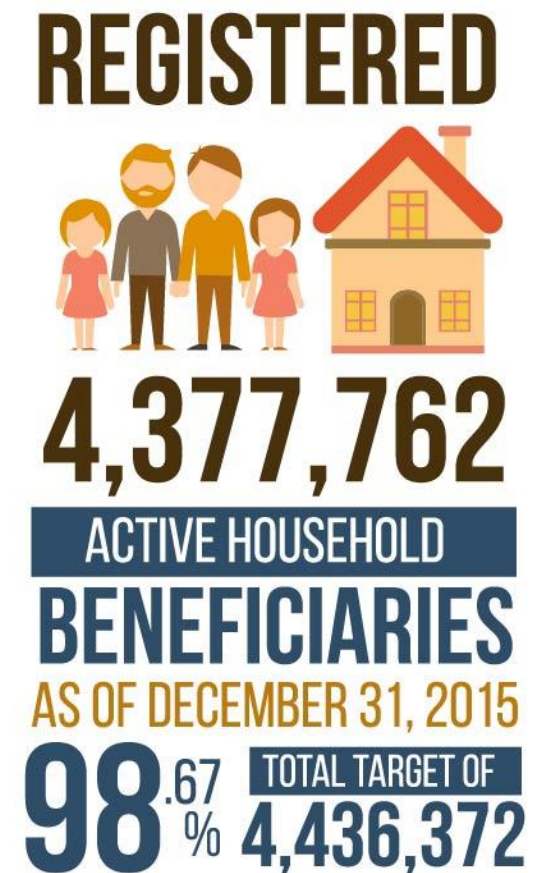
Teacher Yuda held her breath as the booming voice paused before the announcement, "Gillian Rose N. Dala of Lamsalome Day Care Center! Congratulations!"

Teacher Yuda beamed with pride when the name of her four-year-old pupil was declared winner and official representative of the town in the provincial-wide contest.

For Gillian and the rest of the residents in Lamsalome, their most treasured prize was the completion of the day care center.

The new facility bursts with fresh colors replete with learning amenities and tools, far from the old dilapidated center. The ultimate dream of a four-year old learner and her teacher have finally become a reality.

Gillian would eventually win second place in the Draw and Tell contest at the provincial level.



# Women empower themselves

“Dili ko ganahan anang puro mga kahilayan nalang ang sudlan sa mga tao karon. Sayang ang panahon. Maayo nalang nga ila nalang gamiton ilang oras sa mga butang nga makatabang sa ilang kinabuhi.”

There are those who see beauty in diversity. With diverse ideas and beliefs come different ways and means to solve problems.

This best describes twenty-six year old Evangeline Jambong and the villagers of Barangay One, amongst the eleven barangays of Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte, Bangayan that consists of three Puroks that thrive in a 9,276 hectare-expanse. With bountiful mountain and lake, Bangayan has a total population of 1,708 which is composed of 952 males and 898 females. It has a total of 258 households, majority from whom are members of indigenous peoples (IP) tribes: 122 are Manobos, mostly occupying the Lake Mainit area and 47 are Mamanwas, living in the upland, known as Purok Zapanta Valley. With such a large area and diverse cultures, one would surmise that running things at the barangay level is a challenge.

#### Experience like no other

When the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan–Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS) re-entered Kitcharao in 2014 for the National Community-Driven Development Program modality, there was a question on which Barangay in Bangayan the sub-project would be built in. Every Purok wanted a piece of the pie; every tribe wanted the sub-project to serve their own.

Evangeline herself found it difficult to appease every resident. “Kami sa Purok Zapanta, gusto namo ug proyekto duol sa amo. 9 kilometros among purok sa sentro sa barangay mao dili namo mabati ug ang proyekto sa sentro ibutang (In Purok Zapanta, we wanted a project within our community. Our Purok is nine kilometers away from the center of our barangay, so any project situated anywhere near the center of the barangay is disadvantageous to us),” she said.

The Area and Municipal Coordinating Teams of Kitcharao also found it challenging to explain further the importance of a consensual decision by the community as to the sub-project to fund.

By making everyone understand the pros and cons of what they wanted to happen, the community decided to come up with something that would serve everyone in the barangay. One thing they realized was that, the women, whether Manobo, Mamanwa, or Bisaya have the same biological needs - and this is giving birth. Kitcharao has 1,236 families under the regular Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, and 307 families under the Modified Conditional Cash Transfer (MCCT).

“Ang dalan padulong sa among birthing home guba kaayo. Ug mag-ulan lisod tungason. Kami taga Zapanta diha magpa check-up ug manganak, apil na usab ang mga taga lain nga purok. Mao kami tanan nagkasinabot nga mao kana ang among pundohan para sa among sub-project (The road to our barangay birthing home is in really bad condition. When it rains, people have a hard time going up there. All of us in the barangay, regardless of the Purok we belong to, goes there to give birth or have regular pre-natal check-up. That is why we decided to have road concreting as our sub-project),” Evangeline said.

It was a done deal, no doubt. The community decided unanimously on concreting the pathway going to their birthing home as top priority. As every pregnant woman needed the facility, it was also helpful to Pantawid Pamilya partner-beneficiaries who had to access the birthing home from their barangay for compliance to the program.

#### Epitome of a woman laborer

When Barangay Bangayan was prioritized for Kalahi-CIDSS-NCDDP first cycle, everyone, including Evangeline, was in high spirits. For her, that meant better access not only to birthing home – but to their barangay multi-purpose building, barangay hall, and the Alternative Learning System (ALS) Center.

It was good enough that Evangeline was part of the decision-making, but she never would have imagined working physically for the 105-linear meter concrete pathway.

Barangay Chairman Nonito Senonis tapped Evangeline to look for other women who would like to work at the project site; they would be compensated for their services. “Nakita nako ilang kakugi mao nagdesisyon ko nga mangita ug pamaagi nga aduna silay masakyan kada-adlaw ug dili na sila mogasto pa ug pamiliti (I saw how hardworking they were. That is why I tried to find ways for them to have a regular ride going to work so that they will no longer spend money for their fare),” he said.

Evangeline saw this as a great opportunity as this would be a good source of income for her and her friends. She and her neighbors are basically farmers by profession, and had a little over one month before they could harvest their crops. Together with her neighbors, Laica Calipayan, 20, Liza Calipayan, 19, and Irene Anlagan, 18, Evangeline agreed to be part of the women work force. But the catch was, the group would spend P200 for their one-way fare to the project site.

On first day of work, Nonito was astonished how diligent the four women were — working at par with the other men, and at times moving faster than them.

Seeing this, the chairman delivered his promise: the women were regularly fetched by a motorcycle to and from the site. Occasionally, when they had to do overtime, he made sure they had a place to stay for the night. For him, these women were special.

#### Feeling special

The women workers were even more inspired when Kalahi-CIDSS National Program Manager Benilda Redaja visited Kitcharao to monitor the program implementation. Evangeline and the other volunteers were all ecstatic as Director Redaja and members of the Regional Program Management Office, led by Assistant Regional Director Mita Lim, lauded them as they spent time sharing stories at the sub-project site.

“Mao pa to ang una nga higayon nga nabati nako nga espesyal ko, special akong gibuhit. Sa Kalahi lang ko nakahimamat ug mga dagkong tao, mga taga national pa gyud (It was the first time I felt special, and that what I was doing was special. It is only in Kalahi that I was able to meet special, important people, and they were from the national office),” shared Evangeline.

The women of Purok Zapanta would forever treasure the experience. They considered the interaction with the officials as their driving force to continue to matter and bring change for their community.

As for her, Evangeline found purpose in what she was doing. She never thought it was even possible for her to work on and earn money from something she thought was physically for men. She believed it was time well spent.

“Dili ko ganahan anang puro mga kahilayan nalang ang sudlan sa mga tao karon. Sayang ang panahon. Maayo nalang nga ila nalang gamiton ilang oras sa mga butang nga makatabang sa ilang kinabuhi (I don't like it when people spend their time on insignificant and worthless things. It is just a waste of time. It would be much better for people to spend their time well, on something that would improve their lives),” Evangeline said.

For these women, Kalahi-CIDSS ensures that the program provides equal opportunities for everyone – men, women, and IPs. The program believes in the concept of inclusive growth and development where each resident plays an important role in the development of a group or community.

**KALAHI-CIDSS**  
A TOTAL OF  
**2,088,029**  
HOUSEHOLDS BENEFITED FROM

8,990 COMPLETED CDD PROJECTS



# Manobos see a ray of hope in sustainable livelihood

Who would expect to see a trace of technological innovation in a very isolated place?

A group of Manobos in Sitio Bantolaino in Sibagat, Agusan del Sur once claimed that positive change could happen.

In January 2012, 25 partner-beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program in Bantolaino received P10,000 each through the Sustainable Livelihood Program's (SLP) Self-Employment Assistance-Kaunlaran (SEA-K). Eager to gain stable income, the group agreed to pool their grants and ventured into general merchandise business.

Evelyn "Inday" Inocente, a Pantawid Pamilya parent leader was elated when she received her grant.

*"Dako kaayo among pasalamat sa tabang gikan sa SLP tungod niini naay maayong kabag-ohan sa among kinabuhi (We are very grateful for SLP's grant. It brought change to our lives)," she said. "Agig pagbalik sa tabang sa gobyerno, naningkamot kami na naay panginabuhin na matukod alang sa kaayuhan sa tanan (In return to the government's help, we did our best to create a livelihood for the welfare of everyone)."*

Situated in a far-flung area, access to basic commodities and other supplies has never been easy for residents of Sitio Bantolaino. Thus, a general merchandise store was seen as practical and feasible. Through the SEA-K fund, financial assistance and logistic support from the Municipal Local Government Unit (MLGU), and the initiatives of the members, the project was efficiently implemented. Because of the project, the members of the community no longer have to pass a fifteen-kilometer treacherous route and spend over a thousand pesos for transportation in order to purchase goods in the municipality proper.

Bearing in mind profit and vision to bring about change, the association expanded its operations through a joint project with the Sibagat SEA-K Federation on Abaca Production that embarked on a project called Bantolaino SEA-K Electric Power project.

Through its partner, Socio-Economic Uplift Literacy Anthropological and Development Services (SULADS) and with the help of the MLGU, the association was able to buy a mini-hydroelectric generator which was installed at the Bantolaino Falls. Fifty-two households of the sitio have since been provided with electric power twenty-four hours, seven times a week.

"Dako ang kabag-uhan ug tabang ang nahatag sa kuryente sa amoa (The electricity brought a huge change and help to us)," said Evelyn.

Because of the power from the mini-hydro, the association was able to install lighting facilities to the store and the abaca processing area, making it possible to operate in the evenings and on gloomy days.

With innovation came the tribe's exposure to radio and television. Children are made to study and do their assignments easily at night. They were able to acquire more knowledge from educational shows they have watched on TV.

"Mas maganahan nako mag-study kay naa nay suga sa balay (I am more eager to study because we already have light at home)," said one schoolgirl with a sweet smile on her face.

To ensure the sustainability of the power supply, the Bantolaino waterfalls and the power generator are maintained by the community members themselves, men and women alike. In addition, the association has also ventured into micro-lending, offering loans that have aided both members and non-members especially during emergencies.

With their present economic status, they have gained confidence in dealing with other people and even gone to various places without fear of intimidation.

"Tungod sa tabang sa SLP ug sa among pagpaningkamot makaingon dyud ko na kaya ang kabag-uhan (With SLP's help and our hard work, I can say that we can make a change)," concluded Evelyn.

The huge success of the association could easily be attributed to the Manobos themselves in Sitio Bantolaino who embraced hope and perseverance to empower their community.

# 2016

## THRUSTS & PRIORITIES

### Rationale & Context

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) continues its commitment to accountability and effective governance by focusing on achieving the outputs and outcomes that are anchored on Executive Order 43 or the President's Social Contract with the Filipino People and the updated Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016. Likewise, the Department is steadfast in its compliance to several international conventions, treaties and agreements, national framework plans and social welfare and development (SWD) laws that promote the rights of children and youth, women, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and families. Among the recent and emerging international commitments that the Department is committed to pursue is the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint and the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

The Department adopted government reforms that strengthen the link of planning and budgeting through the performance-informed budgeting (PIB) as prescribed in DBM National Budget Memorandum (NBM) No. 117 series of 2013, shift to outcome-based performance-informed budget as prescribed in National Budget Circular (NBC) 552 s. of 2014 and harmonize national government performance monitoring, information and reporting systems as required in Administrative Order AO 25 s. 2011.

These reforms enabled the Department to revisit its mandate, relate them to the overall government priorities, identify and enhanced its outcomes (Organizational Outcomes), outputs (Major Final Outputs), craft the associated performance indicators to measure agency performance and matched them with costs per programs/activities/projects (PAPs).

The Department also identified its three (3) Strategic Goals that will be achieved by 2016. Strategic Goal Number 1 aims to improve the well-being of Pantawid Pamilya families. This is reinforced by Strategic Goal Number 2, which is to increase the number of Poor Families that are provided with at least two social welfare and development programs for those identified by the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR). Related to this is Strategic Goal Number 3 which is to increase the number of fully functional Local Social Welfare and Development Offices (LSWDOs) and officers so as to effectively deliver coordinated social welfare and social protection programs to its clientele.

As we approach the last year of President Aquino's administration, the DSWD's thrusts and priorities for CY 2016 will be adopted to contribute in attaining the Administration's goal of achieving rapid growth and inclusive development. The results of the Department's efforts mainly through its Core Priority Programs will be assessed and evaluated for its relevance, intended and unintended benefits and impacts as part of the transition plan to be conveyed to the succeeding administration.

### Objectives

The 2016 Thrusts and Priorities shall guide and direct all DSWD Bureaus, Services, National Project Management Offices, and Field Offices in the formulation of their respective budget proposals or work and financial plans, performance contracts, sectoral and operational plans and relevant initiatives for the given period. Corresponding funds shall be allocated to ensure its implementation.

It shall also be a guide when assessing and reporting the performance of the Department and each accountable cluster or offices.

# Thrusts & Priorities

Successively, the thrusts and priorities contribute to the achievement of the agency organizational outcomes.

1. Organizational Outcome 1: Capacity of targeted poor families to access opportunities to move their level of well-being improved;
2. Organizational Outcome 2: Rights of the vulnerable sector promoted;
3. Organizational Outcome 3: Continuing compliance of social welfare and development agencies (SWDAs) to standards in the delivery of social welfare services ensured; and
4. Organizational Outcome 4: Improved delivery of coordinated social welfare programs provided by the local government unit (LGU).

The following thrusts and priorities for CY 2016 were formulated anchored on the above considerations:

## A. Policy and Plans Group

1. Implement and monitor the Corporate Plan 2016-2020 and Medium-Term Expenditure Program (MTEP);
2. Formulate and roll-out the 2016-2020 Strategy Map and 2020 DSWD Strategic Goals;
3. Formulate the successor plans for the Philippine Plan of Action for Senior Citizens (PPASC) 2012-2016 and the National Decade Plan for Filipino Family (NDPFF) 2006-2015;
4. Operationalize the Unified Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation – Information System (URBMES-IS) of the Department;
5. Implement the 2015 – 2019 Research Agenda;
6. Mainstream social protection handbook in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating responsive and innovative social protection interventions in the identified priority provinces;
7. Enhance the targeting system by identifying the "near poor"/vulnerable and knowing their needs and including types of disabilities among Persons with Disabilities (PWDs);
8. Advocate for the immediate passage of social protection laws such as Public Solicitation and SWDA Act and other priority legislative measures of the Department;
9. Institutionalize and mainstream Risk Management and Strategy Management in the Department's management processes;
10. Develop, enhance and maintain the management of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems in support of social protection programs including systems for operations and institutionalize the use of the Early Childhood Care and Development Information System (ECCD-IS); and
11. Continue the implementation of a functional Enterprise Data Warehouse.

## B. Operations and Programs Group

1. Cover the 5.2 million NHTS-PR identified poor with at least two (2) Social Welfare Development Programs;
2. Improve the capacities of 2.3 Million Pantawid Pamilya families in accessing opportunities to move their level of well-being by 2016;
3. Increase to 40 the number of province and a majority of their municipalities/cities having a fully-functioning LSWDO;
4. Institutionalize the SWDI Tool and Convergence Tool Kit;
5. Establish a Department-wide Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) protocol/system/capacity building guidelines as part of scenario planning to prepare for disasters with the scale and magnitude of typhoon Yolanda;
6. Enhance Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) policies and guidelines based on the results of the "Community Enterprise Development as a Pathway Out of Poverty" study and implement SLP's different modalities such as cash for building livelihood assets, technical and vocational training, pre-employment assistance fund and the commodity cluster mode;
7. Expand Kalahi CIDSS – National Community Driven Development Program (KC-NCDDP) coverage;
8. Expand the coverage of the Social Pension program to include indigent senior citizens ages 60 years old and above;
9. Adoption of the Harmonized Gender and Development (GAD) Guidelines tool (HGDG) to assess the gender-responsiveness of the DSWD programs and services;
10. Fully implement the recovery and rehabilitation efforts in disaster stricken areas of the Visayas Earthquake,

- Zamboanga Conflict, and Typhoons Sendong, Pablo, Glenda and Yolanda;
11. Streamline processes for immediate placement of eligible children for Adoption, Foster Care and other Alternative Care Placement;
  12. Develop, enhance, and model social protection technologies and expand social protection initiatives through mainstreaming integrated programs that reduce visibility and vulnerability of persons with disabilities (PWDs), indigenous peoples (IPs)/indigenous cultural communities, displaced families, street families, and children in need of special protection (CNSP), senior citizens, and women;
  13. Provide appropriate, immediate and comprehensive social services to distressed overseas Filipinos in countries with deployed Social Welfare Attaches; and
  14. Increase to 40 the number of provinces with majority of their cities and municipalities having a fully-functional LSWDO by provision of technical assistance.

## C. Institutional Development Group

1. Build up capacity of planning officers and program implementers on Gender and Conflict-Sensitivity Training for programs/services in conflict-affected regions identified by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP);
2. Strengthen the regulatory services of the DSWD in the implementation of SWDA's programs and services;
3. Provide technical and resource augmentation to LGUs for responsive and efficient implementation of SWD programs and projects especially in strengthening their capability to implement disaster risk reduction strategies and deliver social protection services;
4. Strengthen capability of the Department as a learning institution for on-the-job training primarily of Social Work students and those of allied professionals;
5. Build capacities of its institutional partners and organizational capabilities towards fostering a culture of excellence and professionalism;
6. Implementation of Rationalization Plan 2 and Succession Planning;
7. Establish a competency-based Human Resource (HR) system for workforce planning and performance management for a common reference point that will lead employees to higher productivity. This includes competency profiling of DSWD offices and personnel;
8. Establish a comprehensive welfare program for DSWD to enhance employees' wellness/welfare; and
9. Implementation of the DSWD Strategic Performance Management System.

## D. Office of the Secretary Group

1. Implement the Integrity Management Plan and IAS Strategic Plan;
2. Undertake advocacy, social marketing and networking activities to effectively communicate the plans and policies of the Department with its publics and stakeholders; and
3. Strengthen documentation of most significant change stories of PAMANA projects.

## E. General Administration and Support Services Group

1. Improve DSWD warehouse policies, guidelines, systems and processes relative to its maintenance, operations, and management;
2. Provide necessary facilities for quality and uninterrupted operations of the Department including the completion/renovation/repair of the Central Office, Regional Offices and the different centers/institutions to complement the increasing number of workforce and clients and the expanded operations of the Department;
3. Continue improving the Work and Financial Planning, Records Management, Property and Asset Management, and Procurement System through on-line transaction;
4. Comply with the Public Financial Management Reform Program to ensure the effective delivery of public services especially to the poor through improved efficiency, transparency and accountability in the use of public funds;
5. Establish a fully functional Financial Management Information System (FMIS) that will improve transparency and accountability in the management of public funds; and
6. Ensure transparent implementation of climate change-related initiatives through an effective tagging and tracking of the Department's climate change expenditure.



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