

Elderly Man Tills Land to Build Own Home



Maximo Capiciño was among those who lost their homes in Villaba, Leyte because of Typhoon Yolanda in 2013. At 72 and without a land of his own, he struggled to rebuild his life from the devastation, along with his 35-year old son Edgar who is a person with disability (PWD).

Kind and soft-spoken, Maximo spoke about his family and the struggle he has endured since 2013. "My wife passed just a few years ago and after Yolanda it was just me and my son here. I have a daughter in Manila and she came to her mother's burial a few years ago. But she hasn't visited since then. She has seven children so I understand why she cannot come often," he said.

Maximo temporarily built a small shack on a lot that was lent to him by the community to help him survive. He built a vegetable garden a few yards away where they take some of their daily food from. "Most of the time, we have zero [money]. If we have neighbours who need to have anything fixed, I go," he said. He can earn Php150 from some of the side-jobs which he uses to buy food which they need to last for three days or even a week. Every time he has to leave for work, Edgar is left to tend to the house and make sure their belongings do not get stolen.

When most people of his age and status would find it difficult to manage a toilet, Maximo made sure that they built and maintained a makeshift toilet near their small house. "I will never live in a house that does not have a toilet," he said jokingly. "There's no water where our house is but I take water from the nearby well every morning just to make sure we have enough for the day," he added.

As of Dec. 31, 2015, the government reported to have completed only 30 percent of the rehabilitation and reconstruction projects in Yolanda-hit communities nationwide.

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Water Day Highlights Plight of Farming Communities in the Philippines

With millions of Filipinos at risk of losing their work to climate change and water depletion, it is crucial to engage all the members of the community, especially the children and the youth, to come together to decrease vulnerabilities among which includes water conservation.

In Bantayan island, Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) Philippines visited Kabangbang Central Elementary School to engage children in informative games to teach them about water conservation and their roles in community-building. Children will know that by conserving water, they can help their parents find ways to sustain the farms during El Niño," said Area Coordinator Ellery Lasala.

According to Lasala, building the awareness among the children will be a good way to share information with the community especially because children tend to be more dynamic than adults.

These activities form part of the continued effort to promote resilience in vulnerable communities in various parts of the Visayas. IRW, an international humanitarian and development organization in Cebu City, partners with the government in projects including Shelter and Livelihood Support, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Disaster Risk-Reduction (DRR) in the municipalities of Bantayan, Madridejos, Santa Fe in Bantayan Island, Daanbantayan and Kanganga, Matag-ob and Villaba, in Leyte



Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities Provided Through Partnership with DSWD

According to a Social Weather Stations (SWD) survey in 2015, about 11.4 million Filipino families are living in poverty. The Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) under the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), launched in 2011, aims to alleviate poverty by improving the living conditions of poor families through provision of livelihood opportunities that can provide long-term income source.

Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) partnered with DSWD-SLP Region VIII to provide livelihood skills training to more than 200 individuals who came from the most vulnerable families in the Municipality of Kananga in Leyte province. The beneficiaries will be provided with a wide variety of skills training to choose from, including Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW), food processing, reflexology, bartending, and housekeeping. The training will be conducted by a National Certified (NC) II institution to ensure that the beneficiaries will be able to acquire the necessary skills to be competent in their chosen field.

The beneficiaries will also be receiving tools and supplies so they may be able to utilize their training and start their own business. The skills training will run from March to September 2016

The partnership between IRW and DSWD-SLP was confirmed in a ceremonial signing of Memorandum of Agreement last March 11, 2016. This was attended by IRW Head of Mission, Syed Shahnawaz Ali, and DSWD-SLP Regional Director, Restituto B. Macuto. Last year, IRW also partnered with DSWD for the construction of a health center in the Municipality of Villaba in Leyte.



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As soon as he learned he was shortlisted for to receive shelter support, he started tilling the land to where it would be built. "We have nothing so all I could do was pray that someone would take notice and give us help. Now finally, we have a house. Miracles do happen!"

Since 2013, Islamic Relief has been working in Leyte to assist vulnerable households, especially the elderly and PWDs, in their recovery from Typhoon Yolanda. Our shelter support program is also linked with sanitation and latrine support to ensure a more holistic approach to improve community health and development.

In Focus: Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learnings (MEAL)



“ I am in love with this job despite the hurdles and the bumps in the road. ”

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) is an aspect critical in the overall success of a project. Shunie Pearl Dela Cruz has been working as Assistant MEAL Officer in our Bantayan field office for more than a year. Her task is primarily to monitor that the agreed standards are followed during project implementation, and to evaluate the overall performance of the organization, among others.

What led you to this job?

My background is really in information technology and marketing. However, I felt like I don't really belong there so I decided to change my profession. Working in MEAL was very challenging at first but thanks to my colleagues who were very helpful and the organization itself which provided me with a proper training opportunity, I was able to learn a lot and build my capacity to perform this job well. And now I am in love with this job despite the hurdles and the bumps in the road. Ten years from now, I still see myself working in this field. I can't imagine myself anywhere else.

What do you like most about your job?

It's when I'm able to establish a connection with the community. It's knowing that I have a part in empowering vulnerable communities and helping them have better lives.

What is the most challenging part of your job?

I encounter a lot of frustrations at work. But I always tell myself to just push ahead because I have to overcome the challenges. At the end of the day, I love my job and that's what keeps me going.

What lessons did you learn that you would like to share with others?

You have to be diligent in everything you do. Patience is also very important. Working in the field of development can be frustrating and stressful especially when you don't get the results you wanted, but keep it cool and take it slow because you will reach your goals eventually.



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In Bisaya, "pakiglambigit" means "to get involved" which captures the essence of the IRW Newsletter, an effort to inform and involve the communities, local government units, private sector, and other development partners in projects and activities.