

Three years after super-typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda - Project Updates: MIHANDs in Leyte, Philippines

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Summative Background:

Three (3) years ago, the Multi-stakeholders Initiative for Humanitarian Action against Disasters (MIHANDs) formerly the Mindanao Humanitarian Action Network against Disasters (MiHANDs) arrives in the island of Leyte to contribute its humanitarian intervention to selected communities affected by the super typhoon Haiyan in November 2013. It started with an emergency response to four (4) communities and served more than 1,500 families with food packs, hygiene kits, psychosocial activities and alternative health services. Such initial initiatives open the window for the institution to engage further beyond emergency response resulted to implementation of the early recovery and comprehensive rehabilitation projects to the communities of Bangkal, Villaba, Leyte, Don Potenciano Larrazabal, Ormoc City, Lat-osan, Palompon, Leyte and Tambulid, Ormoc City. Social structure formation was among the significant component initiated and establishes nine (9) People's Organizations (POs) of women, fisherfolks and farmers which starts 382 active individual pioneer members which currently some POs continuously increasing at the same time others also decreasing due to technicalities of some members against their organizational policies. All created organizations given projects related to livelihoods, skills and knowledge enhancement and MIHANDs personnel consistently guided the POs thru constant monitoring of given projects by its presence during organizational monthly meetings. Conducted hands-on coaching and technical development to PO leaders in the management of their respective projects to ensure sustainability and further improvements.

Among the significant projects given that currently manage by the POs were Micro Finance for Individual Livelihood, Hog Butchering, Rice Trading, Agricultural Production, Fishing Gears and Equipment for fishermen and backyard livestock raising. All of these projects directly manage by the created Project Implementing Teams (PMTs) of respective POs protected by a policies and mechanics of operation. A certain bank accounts also established of every organizations in fact, some of which have separated bank accounts per project component in order to easily trace or account specific project funds. Direct beneficiaries of projects exclusive or limited only to active members and the framework nearly aligns with the cooperative principles such as all members entitled for an annual incentives coming from the generated net incomes of all projects.

As of today, there were two (2) associations particularly at Brgy. Bangkal had fused into one due to observation of being dual in nature as farmers at the same time fishermen. From 9 originally created, People's Organizations (POs) now only the following;

1. Bangkal Farmers & Fisherfolks Association (BFFA) - Brgy. Bangkal, Villaba, Leyte
2. Bangkal Women's Association (BaWA) - Brgy. Bangkal, Villaba, Leyte
3. Lat-osan Farmer's Organization (LFO) - Brgy. Lat-osan, Palompon, Leyte
4. Uswag Kababaehan Association (UKA) - Brgy. Lat-osan, Palompon, Leyte
5. Lat-osan Fisherfolks Association (LFA) - Brgy. Lat-osan, Palompon, Leyte
6. Bangon Mag-uuma Association (BAMAS) - Brgy. Don Potenciano Larrazabal, Ormoc City
7. Nagkahiusang Kababayan-an Tuboran sa Kalamboan (NATUKA) - Brgy. Don Potenciano Larrazabal, Ormoc City
8. Tambulilid Women's Organziation (TAWO) - Brgy. Tambulilid, Ormoc City

Current Status of Associations

The associations respectively arrives its levels of improvement in terms of organizational aspects and solidarity among members and even between associations. Infact, there were times that they've invited each other on organizational activities like annual gatherings as part of collaboration building as organized and assisted by MIHANDs. It serves also as venue of sharing experiences and learning in the fields of managing organizational and projects for the year round operation considering that associations were located in far distance communities.



It's also the venue that the entire affair of the associations shall be reviewed especially the level of achievements or benefits from the acquired projects. Usual activities held by associations were monthly meetings, meetings of the Project Implementing Teams (PITs) per associations and annual gathering at the same time Christmas celebration. Part of the project net income for the whole year operation shall be given to individual members as their annual incentives aside of the benefits which members' avails in relation with individual livelihood projects. Savings also of individual members shall be returned in order for them to enjoy together with respective families in celebrating the Christmas season.



With all the above-estipulated activities of the associations, MIHANDs personnel always in their sides as mentoring partner which provides consistent technical support and advises to make the

associations improves and expanded. Regularly work with the associations' officers to guides them in preparation for long term journey and bigger responsibilities a a group. Some of associations has acquired additional project funds support coming from certain agency of the Philippine government.

In the fields of organizing and dynamics life of an association, membership is changeable in terms of numbers because of two major factors. First, certain member/s voluntarily terminated her/his membership because of personal reason and second, termination of certain member/s because of major violations committed which arrives into maximum penalty which was termination from the associations.

Status of Associations' Projects

The components of tangible projects which on the position of differennt associations were;

♣ **Micro Finance for Livelihood** - a project windows directly managed by created People's Organizations (POs) provided support to members in their individual and existing income generating activities such as food production/selling, fish selling, dress making, manicure/pedicure services and selling of home products. Members could borrows allowable amount from their organizations and invest the money as capital/additional for the livelihood activities. This component effectively benefited by members thru opportunity to access money to augment their income generating activities in a very modest interest rate plus benefits of having incentives from the annual net incomes. It also develop the capability of members to save in the context of community banking because portion of the amount paid goes to individual savings. Big portion of the amount repayed by certain members shall be saved as individual savings. Women's associations were the most popular in this projects becasue all of the members enaged to different income generation projects. The given amount of every associations are now improving and approxmately increase by 15 - 30% excluding operational cost and dividends distributed to members;

♣ **Hog Butchering** - related to livelihood projects but directly managed by selected individual members of the POs which serves as the Project Implementing Teams (PITs). The main purpose of the project was improve the starting amounts given to POs and net incomes shall be divided into 3 parts, for annual shares to members, incentives of the PITs and additional to capitalization.



Direct benefits of members was the available supply of fresh meat for family's consumption which payable for a certain target period (usually 15 days). It's a great help to members having limited budget for viands which usually generated incomes of once a week only. Frequent of hog butchering by the POs usually twice per month and no succeeding butchering if the current collectibles not collected of at least 85% as agreed policies. In terms of income, a minimum 80 kilos hog and other expenses amounting to Php 10,000.00 could generates a net income of about Php 2,300.00 - 2,600.00;



♣ **Fish Selling** - some of women's PO engaged in fish vending as primary source of living even before the project started.



When the implementation of projects started, members with the aforesaid income generating activities augmented their capital in selling fish. Before the project, members with fish selling activities usually lend their capital from private lending institutions with high interest rate as much as 20% of the borrowed principal amount but when the project started they've gradually detached from it due to available funds of their organization for the purpose. Usually, they could sell out 20 to 30 kilos per day and generated incomes which address the needs for their families;

♣ **Dress Making** - there were few members engaged in dress making and other sewing jobs as main source of family's income.



They borrowed certain amount from their organization and capitalized it in buying materials needed. Before the project their capacity to receive sewing works are limited because they don't have available materials for an order and usually they asked advance payment to procure the materials but when their project started anytime they could make dresses and other sewing work products like curtains and among others;

♣ **Raising Backyard Livestock** - an individual project avails by members of the associations and serves as an additional source of income of the family.



At Dinay, member of the 500-member Women's Association (WMA) with 100 piglets raised in her backyard pig raising.

Hog raising was the common because aside of being familiar how to maintain, it's the source of meat products easily sold out within 3 months period only. Raising chicken was the second types of backyard livestock and it takes only 35 to 45 days and the owners could gain income from it. Members could asked the associations to borrow an amount the later could found piglets/chicks to buy. Then, the Project Implementing Team (PIT) shall review the application of members and see to it that there's available piglets/chick and together with the applying member/s, the PIT/s pays the piglet/s or chick/s.



Backyard Livestock (chickens) @ Bangkal

After the target period of harvest, the member/s request the organization/PIT to conduct final monitoring before the selling of hog/chicken. After selling the livestock the borrowed amount shall be returned to the organization with very minimal interest. Members could apply again if they wanted.

♣ **Rice Trading** - an organizationally manage project of women's POs provided services primarily to members and community in general thru selling retail rice supply in the neighborhood especially those membes/residents which don't have enough money to buy at the commercial center of the municipality with distance of about 4 - 8 kilometers away for a few kilos of rice.



Rice Trading Project of Bangkal Women's Association (BWA)

They could save transportation cost amounting to 30.00 - 40.00 pesos back and forth. This project greatly helps local people especially member of the POs because PO members were granted to credit the rice and payable after 15 days period. Non-members could also avail credit but with the guarantee of PO members whom confirmed the accountability. For member consumers, a 1.00 peso of every kilo of rice goes to member's savings which return after the annual audit, usually during organiational annual gatherings. Three (3) Rice Trading center established and currently operational, it was owned by the Bangkal Women's Association (BWA) at Bangkal, Villaba, Leyte,

Nagkahiusang Kakayen-an Tuboran sa Kalamboan (NATUKA) at Don Potenciano Larrazabal, Ormoc City and Tambulilid Women's Association (TAWO) at Brgy. Tambulilid, Ormoc City.

♣ **Agricultural Production** - This project was among the significant mainly for farming sector and comprises the support of rice seeds, corn seeds, root crops, vegetables, coconut seedlings, farm tools, working animals and other farm inputs like technical trainings of farmers on organic agriculture.



It was directly benefited by Bangkal Farmers and Fishermen's Association (BFFA), Bagon Mag-uuma Association (BAMAS), Lat-osan Farmer's Organization (LFO) and Tambulilid Women's Organization (TAWO). For the past years the attentive and interested individuals joined the created People's Organizations (POs) were on the level of benefiting the outcome of being united. Aside of the materials provided by the project, their organizations maintained the funds for the same purpose and members have opportunity to access as loans during planting season to be used in land preparation and other necessary inputs.



Lessen the situation of being controlled by middlemen in the locality and capability of bagaining power has developed. Although, the status still improving and need further support primarily by MIHANDs, the active functions of POs signifies the concrete evidence that farming sector in the served communities already attained victory and prosperity.



The provided sacks of corn and rice seeds make the beneficiary rebuild the capacity in production at the same time the organization maintain the capability to provide the same support to members in succeeding planting. Root crops and vegetables seeds supports make them capable to improve diversification methods in farming and utilize farm lands into more productive to increase family's food security.



Provision of coconut seedlings regain the lossing hopes of coconut farmers and they're now on almost 3 years from planting the new coconuts in their lands and waiting another few years to bear fruits and productive capacity. The provided working animals, farm tools and garden tools greatly adds to lightened the challenges in land preparations and maintenance due to expensive farm labor cost in the locality today especially that majority of them (members) don't have owned working animals and basic farm tools such plows and harrows.



But thru the support, they only spent small amount for the maintenance cost in fact, several members were now started to engaged in backyard gardening as additional source of income at the same time available foods for the table. For the farmer's associations of Brgy. Lat-osan and Brgy. Don Potenciano Larrazabal, local offices of the Department of Agriculture (DA) extended its programs thru provision of additional funds for the farmers' PO projects and additional farm equipment such as hand tractors and water pump for mini-irrigation.



♣ **Fishing Related Projects** - fisherfolks sector was also provided with appropriate support to improve their main source of livelihood such as provision of fishing nets, banca, marine engine and fish aggregating devices to augment fish supplies.



Provision of marine engine to fishermen's associations

It also includes the rehabilitation of mangroves as significant component in coastal resources to maintain and improve breeding sanctuaries of different species of fish. Small scale fishermen and local fisherfolks strongly depends on coastal areas in terms of economic needs for the families. Fisherfolks associations of Brgy. Bangkal and Brgy. Lat-osan managed the projects in accordance with agreed policies. Individual members avails the support in a recoverable manner.



Boys (and girls) school project of Bangkal Farmers & Fishermen's Association (BFA)

The abovementioned supports directly turn-over to associations as the sole owner with members as directly recipients. At this moment the projects ran POs harmoniously and improving with benefits directly enjoyed by members' families. Repayment gradually collected so that the associations have maintain the project funds for the same purpose in the future. Projects given to associations attracted other fishermen to join the groups and it serves as vehicle for expansion in neighbouring communities. Interest and motivation of members changing into more inclusive and participative unlike in the beginning that individually hesitant to join due to lacked of understanding the importance of association. In more than two years, associations developed the capacity to think, analyze and formulate directions and plan as one sector. Aside of the existing projects they were now planning to upgrade organizational endeavors such as developing the coastline into more productive in the context of aqua-culture and mari-culture. Started to discuss and linked to local agencies concerning coastal resource development which beneficial to fisherfolks communities. Considers also income generating oppotunities aside in fishing, as secondary source of income with both organizational and individual initiatives.

MIHANDs journey with communities of island of Leyte level up into normal development interventions from the early recovery and rehabiiltation. Establish enough foundation of social structure to make communities prepare of the incoming challenges in near future. The status of associations reaches the level of looking for solidarity building which started thru inter - PO visits and attendance of significant occasions. The implemented projects of MIHANDs was only a little part of contribution to the lives of the beneficiaries but it opens opportunities for the POs to develop as community/group and not individual.

At this moment, attendance of MIHANDs personnel on POs monthly meetings continuesly conducted

in order to guides the associations towards endless journey of their existence. The women, the farmers and the fisherfolks still longing for continuous support hoping that the sacrifices in creating their associations could not be turns to zero again.

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