



DSWD

Department of Social Welfare and Development



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Strengthening Bayanihan Spirit



Vision

The Department of Social Welfare and Development envisions all Filipinos free from hunger and poverty, have equal access to opportunities, enabled by a fair, just and peaceful society.

Mission

To lead in the formulation, implementation, and coordination of social welfare and development policies and programs for and with the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged.



About the Cover

DSWD Field Office XII continues to fulfill its mandates despite the hazards of global pandemic. Its workforce remains committed to reach out and serve the poor and the vulnerable with quality programs, projects and activities.



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Message

The year 2020 was a challenging one, yet, the entire workforce of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office (FO) XII soldiered on and continued to deliver the much needed programs and services to the public.

For this, I commend the entire FO XII family under the leadership of Director Cezario Joel Espejo, for coming up with this 2020 Annual Report which encapsulates the FO's accomplishments in the past year.

The theme of your Annual Report, "Strengthening Bayanihan Spirit", aptly summarizes the highlights of the programs and services that you implemented amid the health crisis. Foremost of these was the Social Amelioration Program. Likewise, you continued with the regular programs such as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, Social Pension Program, Sustainable Livelihood Program, KapitBisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services, Supplementary Feeding Program, and Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation, among many others.

The FO XII accomplishments demonstrate its perseverance and dedication to genuine and compassionate public service. Despite the threat to health and well-being, they remained undaunted and brought the government closer to the citizenry.

May FO XII success in the past year inspire you to achieve more for the various sectors that you vowed to serve. I enjoin FO XII to continue to epitomize the essence of being angels in red vest and make a real difference in people's lives.

Ipagpatuloy natin ang serbisyong mapagkalinga at may malasakit.


ROLANDO JOSELITO DELIZO BAUTISTA
Secretary



Message

Given the challenges of 2020, the resilience, responsiveness to public service, and commitment to good governance enabled the workforce of the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII) to carry on and continue to deliver the much-needed programs and services to our fellow Filipinos.

The challenges encountered brought the message of hope and solidarity. It has shown how we are all connected to each other. It led the Field Office XII to redefine its systems, plans and strategies so that amid the pandemic, we will be true to our mandate in responding the pressing needs of the communities.

Despite the risks and difficulties encountered, our "Angels in Red Vest" continued to work with the local communities to provide not just assistance, but a source of strength and inspiration to those in need. The various responsibilities come to us not as a burden, but as renewed commitment in our mission for a "Maagap at Mapagkalingang Serbisyo."

This annual report showcases various stories of beneficiaries, local government units, partners and other stakeholders as we work together as one to ensure that in times of darkness, no one will be left behind.

As government agency, DSWD continues to fulfill its mandates with transparency, accountability and inclusivity. This annual report will put faces to figures of what we have done so far, especially to the poorest of the poor.

I hope we all carved out some important lessons out of the year 2020 experience. The days, months and years to come will be more challenging but fulfilling, as we continue to advance our goal in making DSWD a world standard in the delivery of social services.


CEZARIO JOEL C. ESPEJO
Regional Director

2020 IN REVIEW

The year 2020 had been a challenging year for the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII) after the declaration of Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) that significantly affected many families and resulted in the unemployment of many Filipinos that causes to slowdown majority of economic activities.

With this, the Department, as the lead agency in social protection provides measures to mitigate the effects of the pandemic to the vulnerable sectors through the implementation of RA 11469 or also known as “Bayanihan to Heal as One Act” executing the provision of emergency cash assistance amounting to P5,000 under Social Amelioration Program (SAP).

The DSWD FO XII was able to disburse a total amount of P4.26 billion, benefitting 991,017 affected families belonging to 4Ps and non-4Ps. With this, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) has acknowledged Region 12 as the 3rd Best Performing Region nationwide in terms of SAP distribution.

The Field Office, however, in view of achieving the targets under the Organizational Outcomes, did an extra mile in its efforts of ensuring that the Department’s mandate in providing social protection programs and services are being delivered timely to the clients.

While there are numerous adjustments to the Field Office’s targets both in physical and financial aspects due to the effect of the pandemic, it continued to adapt to new normal, new strategies and initiatives aligned to the policy adhered to by the Department.

The implementation of SAP has significantly reduced the adverse impact of COVID-19 on the socio-economic well-being of target beneficiaries and accelerated their initial recovery steps, especially those poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged sectors in the region.

PANTAWID PAMILYANG PILIPINO PROGRAM (4Ps)

The 4Ps is an investment in human capital that started in 2008, which aims to eradicate extreme poverty in the country by supporting the health and education needs of Filipino families ages 0-18 years old.

The Department continued to implement the 4Ps, which currently serve more than 240,000 active households, utilizing more than P4.7 billion program funds from January to December 2020.

The Field Office has reached 99.12% of its target beneficiaries that were able to avail health, education, and other social welfare services.

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM (SLP)

DSWD FO XII provided livelihood support to 1,572 families through the various modalities of the SLP, utilizing more than P25 million funds.

Through SLP, families belonging to the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises or MSMEs who were directly affected by the border lockdowns were given the chance to improve their business through the provision of Livelihood Assistance Grant (LAG) in which the agency granted the seed capital fund to 11,091 beneficiaries amounting to P98.3 million.

The said amount is part of the government’s livelihood recovery and rehabilitation assistance to low-income families in Region 12 benefitting ambulant and street vendors, sari-sari store owners, and other individuals involved in vending activities.

KALAHI-CIDSS

Meanwhile, under the Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-A Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS), 115 sub-projects have been implemented to 17 targeted municipalities.

Despite the restrictions brought about by pandemic, the agency was able to facilitate the completion of sub-projects to over 44,648 families in different parts of the region.

The Program has shifted from a regular community-driven development (CDD) strategy to disaster response operations modality (DROM) which allows communities to gain control over decisions and resources amid pandemic as part of the government’s response and rehabilitation efforts.

PROTECTIVE PROGRAMS

Aside from SAP, Emergency Subsidy under Bayanihan 2 and the Specialized Programs, DSWD FO XII also ensured that clients are assisted through the protective programs.

ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS IN CRISIS SITUATIONS (AICS)

In the midst of pandemic, the DSWD continues to support the recovery of individuals and families from unexpected crisis through the AICS.

The assistance, which is handled by seven (7) Crisis Intervention Unit (CIU) Satellite Offices in Region 12, provided educational, medical, transportation, burial, and food and non-food assistance to 15,827 clients nationwide.

MALASAKIT CENTER

As the government’s initiative to improve the delivery of health care services to the people, and to ensure financial access to and efficiency in the process of availing medical and financial assistance, Malasakit Centers have been established in different health care institutions in the region.

Four (4) Malasakit Centers started to operate in the region. These are Dr. Jorge P. Royeca Hospital in General Santos City, Cotabato Regional and Medical Center in Cotabato City, Sultan Kudarat Provincial Hospital, and South Cotabato Provincial Hospital, adopting a multi-sectoral and streamlined approach in addressing health issues consistent with the whole-of-government approach.

The agency was able to serve a total of 1,452 clients with a total amount of P5.31 million worth of assistance.

SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING PROGRAM (SFP)

As part of the DSWD’s contribution to the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) program of the government, the Department continues to implement its SFP, which is the provision of food in addition to the regular meals to children currently enrolled in child development centers and supervised neighborhood play.

From January to December, a total of 98,988 children have been provided with SFP, amounting to P172,042,030 or 99.87% of their total target.

SOCIAL PENSION FOR INDIGENT SENIOR CITIZENS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CENTENARIANS ACT

To help augment the daily subsistence and medical needs of indigent senior citizens, the DSWD FO XII continues to implement the Social Pension Program for Indigent Senior Citizens.

As of December, a total of 264,358 indigent senior citizens have received their social pensions amounting to more than P1.5 billion.

Under the Republic Act 10868 or the Centenarians Act of 2016, all Filipinos who have reached 100 years old and above, whether residing in the Philippines or abroad, will be given with centenarian gift amounting to P100,000 and a Letter of Felicitation signed by the President of the Philippines.

The Department has recognized and awarded a total of 54 centenarians. It released a total amount of P5.4 million for this year 2020.

2020 IN REVIEW

ALTERNATIVE FAMILY CARE PROGRAM

DSWD FO XII also implements the Alternative Family Care Program in compliance with Republic Act (RA) No. 8552 or the Domestic Adoption Act of 1998, RA No. 9523 or the Act Requiring Certification to Declare a Child Legally Available for Adoption (CDCLAA), and RA No. 10165 or the Foster Care Act of 2012.

A total of eight (8) children were placed for domestic adoption, while 31 were placed for foster care. Meanwhile, two (2) children have been endorsed for inter-country adoption.

REGISTRATION, LICENSING, AND ACCREDITATION OF SWDAS

Embodying its regulatory functions, the DSWD FO XII ensures that social welfare and development agencies (SWDAs) and service providers are implementing effective programs and services through the registration and licensing of SWD agencies and accreditation of SWD programs, services, and service providers.

Ten (10) social welfare agencies were registered while seven (7) were issued with a license to operate. The agency meanwhile has accredited 90 daycare centers (DCCs) and daycare workers (DCWs), five (5) supervised neighborhood play (SNP), and five (5) pre-marriage counselors (PMC).

DISASTER RESPONSE

The Department provides assistance to localities affected by the typhoons, particularly during the last quarter of the year when a series of typhoons occurred.

DSWD FO XII delivered 14,707 family food packs and 7,595 non-food items to local government units. This is part of the Department's mandate to provide augmentation support to LGUs during disasters and

calamities.

In the midst of the pandemic, the Department has also provided family food packs to 65,428 families or persons affected by the COVID-19 pandemic including those Locally Stranded Individuals (LSIs) and Returning Overseas Filipinos (ROFs).

As part of the early recovery interventions of DSWD to families whose houses have been damaged by the recent typhoons, the Department implements Cash-for-Work (CFW) and Emergency Shelter Assistance (ESA) and released the total amount of more than P14 million to cover 1,250 affected families.

Meanwhile, the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Program helped 66,425 households through CFW initiatives amounting to P147 million in Region 12 including some areas in Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao.

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 70 IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the Executive Order No. 70 series of 2018 or Institutionalizing the Whole-of-Nation Approach in Attaining Inclusive and Sustainable Peace creating the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), DSWD FO XII has implemented various social welfare and development programs and services towards addressing the various risks and vulnerabilities contributing to insurgency.

The DSWD FO XII has provided program interventions amounting to P5.29 million for 466 former rebels in 23 local government units or a total of 103 barangays.

BECOMING BETTER AND STRONGER FOR THE YEAR 2021

With the continued threat of COVID-19, the year 2021 will undoubtedly bring new challenges, but the DSWD FO XII together with its workforce remains committed to deliver *Maagap at Mapagkalingang Serbisyo* to the people in SOCCSKSARGEN Region.

Organizational Outcome 1:

Well-being of the poor families improved

10 T'boli FARMERS receive farm CATTLES



12 T'boli WOMAN'S crusade: Empowering women



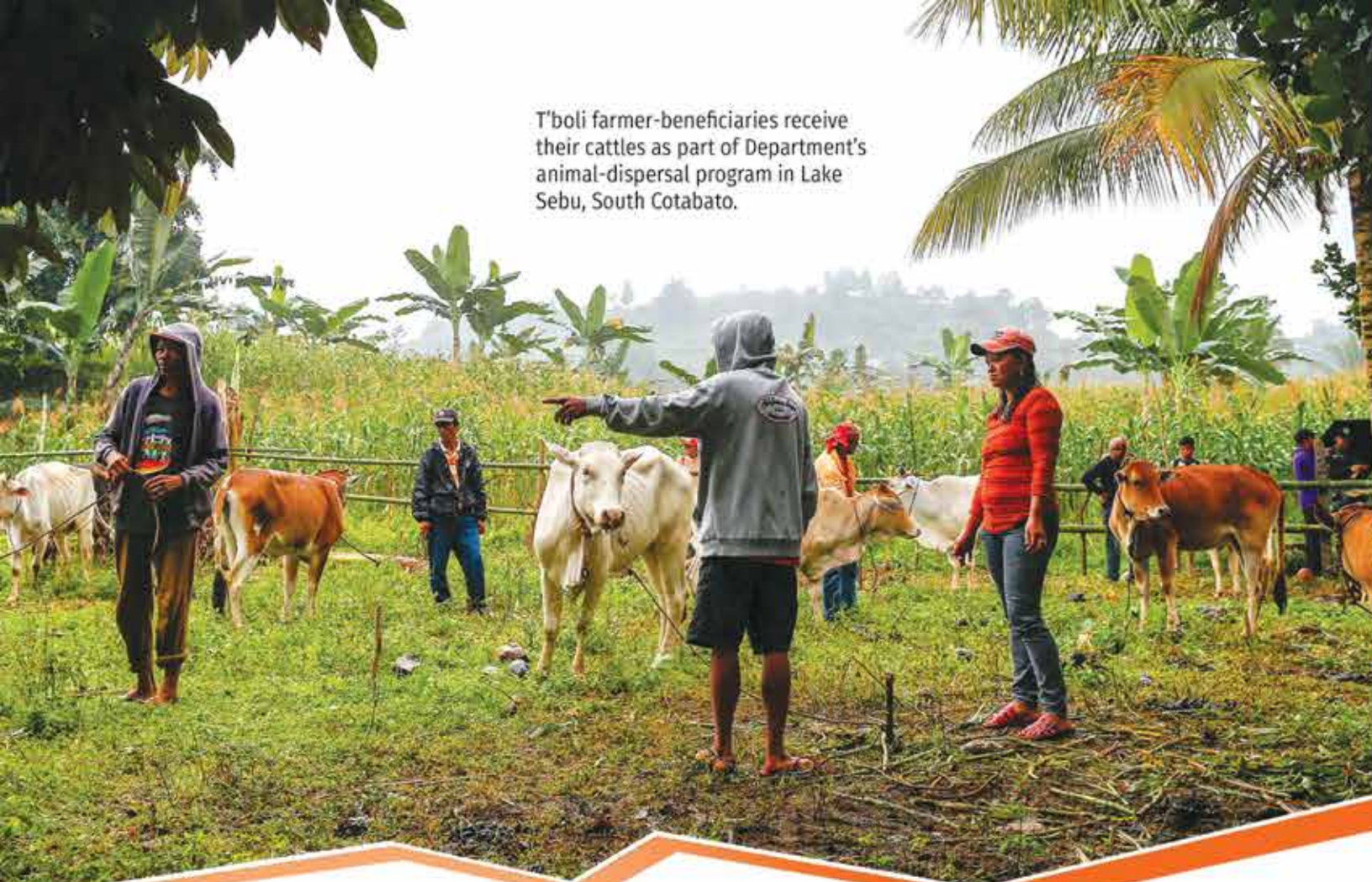
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T'boli farmer-beneficiaries receive their cattles as part of Department's animal-dispersal program in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato.



T'boli FARMERS receive farm CATTLES

LAKE SEBU, South Cotabato — As dawn breaks in a small uphill village in this town mainly dominated by native people, Rudy Sulan was excited — preparing early from his house to get at the venue where the state will release livelihood assistance as part of the government's punch to curve poverty.

"I need to be early at the area. This is my first time to avail of the government's program. I will take care and work to breed our cattle," Sulan, 53, who owns a small land where he grows banana, bamboo, and abaca trees, said in the local dialect.

A former village councilor in Klubi, Sulan thanked the government for looking into their needs, and the intervention he described as important for people like them in a far-flung community.

Another recipient, Dindo Kayugan, 49, shared the same view with Sulan, describing the government support as an answered prayer since he has been praying for a farm animal that he will use for their farm.

The two elders were among the 27 qualified farmer-beneficiaries who received their cattles as part of the agency's animal-dispersal program under Kalahi-CIDSS, a program for Indigenous Peoples funded by Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA) of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process.

Bonifacio V. Selma Jr, assistant regional director for operations of Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII), explained the program specifically aims to improve the socio-economic condition of residents in isolated, hard-to-reach, and conflict-affected communities in the region.

"The good thing with the program is we do not dictate the villagers on the kind of project they should propose for government to fund. We let them decide and think what project they urgently need in their community," Selma said.

At the same time, the agency chief noted the intervention was designed to strengthen the implementation of Executive Order No. 70 signed by President Duterte in December 2018.

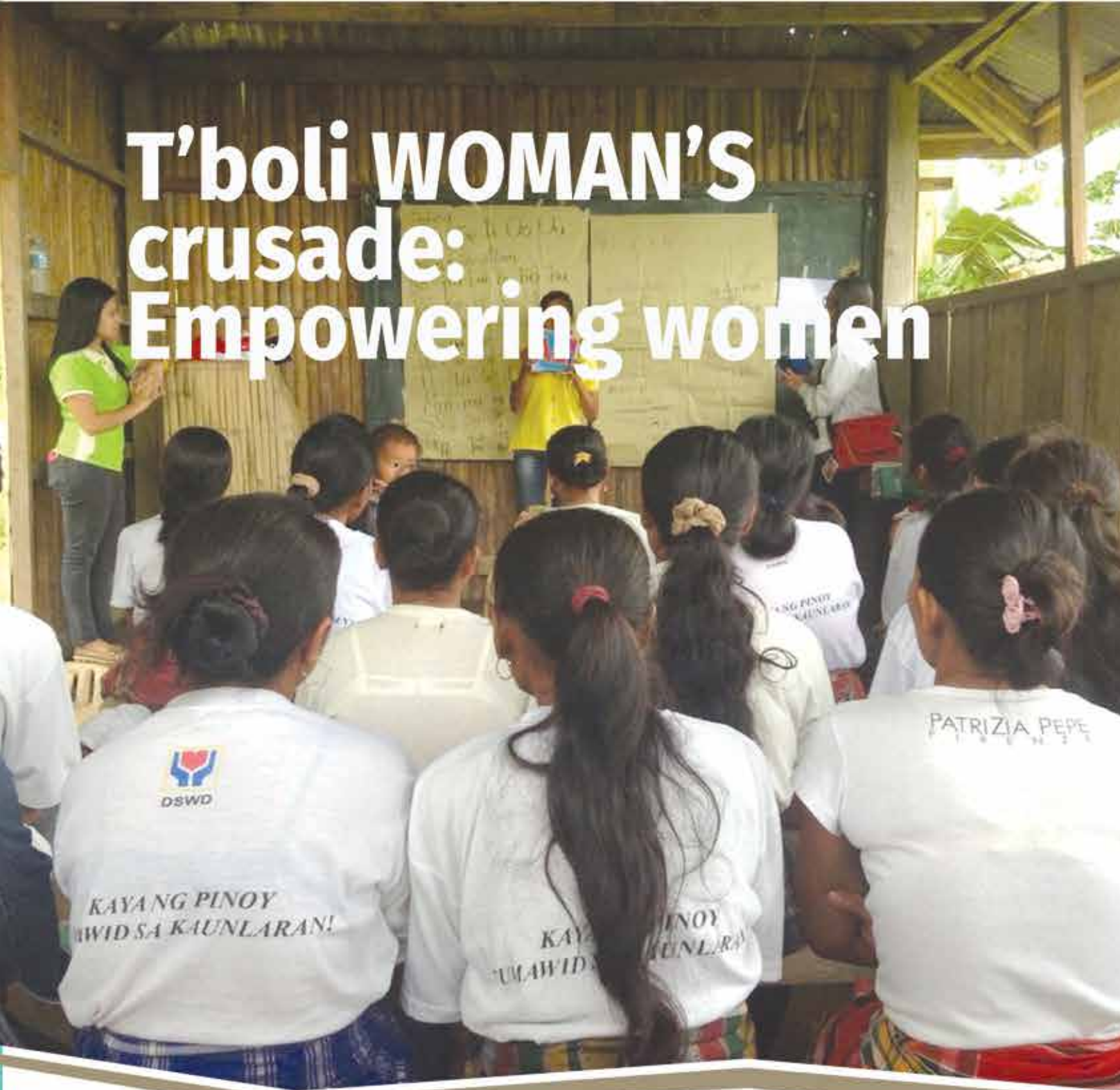
Under EO 70, President Duterte directed all local officials and government line agencies to adopt the national peace framework and institutionalizing the whole-of-nation approach in attaining "inclusive and sustainable peace" in the country as part of

the approach in "addressing the root causes" of the armed conflict.

Meanwhile, DSWD FO XII assistant regional director for operations Bonifacio V. Selma, Jr., Kalahi-CIDSS Pamana deputy program manager John Kevin Camarinas, and Kalahi-CIDSS regional infrastructure specialist Engr. Rolly Teofilo facilitated the distribution of eight (8) carabaos and ten (10) cattles to beneficiaries of Barangay Palao and Kiloyao in Libungan, North Cotabato.

Across the region, the PAMANA project covers 11 areas with certificate of ancestral domain title including Kitaotao in Bukidnon; Carmen, Arakan, Libungan, Aleosan, Alamada, Midsayap, Pikit in North Cotabato; Malungon and Malapatan in Sarangani, and T'boli, Lake Sebu, Norala and Tandingan in South Cotabato.





T'boli WOMAN'S crusade: Empowering women

LAKE SEBU, South Cotabato – Sayna Cafon was born and raised in this hinterland town. Although she finished her primary school, she was not able to get a degree in college due to financial problem.

She knows the value of education.

“My parents’ source of income then was only fishing at the lake and it cannot support to send us to school,” Cafon, now a mother of two, claimed.

For a young T’boli native woman like her, while others are leaving to get a better life abroad, Cafon, 32, said she decided to stay in their poor rural village of Tasiman rather to a distant city overseas with millions of people.

“That’s my crusade. I wanted to help my neighbors. Most of them are the same as me. We haven’t gone to college,” she admitted.

Years back, Cafon was unanimously chosen by her fellow citizen in their village as one of the parent leaders under the government’s Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program.

For more than five years she has been working without any reward along with CCT workers and local government officials.

“I am doing this with love without any expectation in return from the government,” she said.

Ms. Cafon finished a training program of the Department of Education’s Alternative Learning System (ALS), a modular non-formal education scheme for dropouts in elementary and secondary schools, out-of-school youths, non-readers, working Filipinos, and even senior citizens.

“Now she was hired by the Department of Education (DepEd) as one of their mobile teachers in the region. She is now starting teaching with her fellow villagers,” Naifah Sarip Balindong said, the division chief, Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) of Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII).

“She is very active not only with us in the program but in all affairs of local government unit of Lake Sebu. We know from the start that she has leadership,” she added.

When the CCT started in 2008, around 8,533 groups, with 25-30 members, were organized out of more than 256,000 qualified beneficiaries covered by the program.

Each member was able to select their parent leader to lead their group. The parent leaders were selected by voting and others by volunteering.

After the identification of parent leaders, they were called for training involving the development of their leadership skills and re-orientation of the cycle and description of the program.

Accordingly, the program has become an instrument to make sure that their presence and opinion will matter. They were encouraged and inspired to participate in some of the community activities.

It was observed that the monthly attendance to Family Development Session being conducted by the Municipal Links and other partners in the area, is one of the strategies that inspired the beneficiaries to participate and involve themselves in the activities of their communities.

“The way you deal with them, your visibility, their concerns, and problems addressed properly, and your respect with them, play a vital role. These are our strategies on the ground,” Director Cezario Joel Espejo of DSWD FO XII cited.

In 2019, the monthly grants of beneficiaries have increased under Republic Act (RA) 11310 signed by President Duterte in a bid to beef up the government’s social services.

A child enrolled in daycare and elementary programs will receive P300 while 8P500 and P700 for those enrolled in junior high school and senior high school, respectively, for maximum of ten (10) months per year.

A health and nutrition grant of P750 per month and rice subsidy amounting to P600 per month for a maximum of 12 months, are also be given to the family beneficiaries.

All program recipients have to observe and follow conditions that include sending school-aged children to school, pre and post-natal care for mothers, regular and preventive check-ups for children aged five and below, deworming for children aged 14 and below, and attendance to the monthly conduct of the Family Development Session.





KEEPING the DREAM alive

LAKE SEBU, South Cotabato- Viewed from a distance atop the mountain of the “Summer Capital of the South”, Barangay Lamfugon, home of Obu tribe, is a gift to anyone’s eyes. The picturesque trails of emerald rice and corn field, and other agricultural plantations are giving nostalgic and bountiful vibe for lowlanders coming to place. The splendor of hills and valleys’ green vegetation is carefully taken cared of by the tribe with colorful culture and tradition.

At a young age, Danny A. Longgo, 45, has experienced what it means to be poor in a community where from none to once a day meal is common to every family, where education is an elusive dream, and where access to services is as far as next to impossible to reach.

Danny, together with his brothers and sisters, was left with no choice but to stop his study. Going to a distant school, with an empty stomach while risking their lives crossing rivers and hiking dangerous hills, was unbearable.

“Sa sitwasyon namon, asta diin kami kaya mangarap? (In our dire situation, until where we can set our dreams),” the young Danny used to ask himself before. He stopped going to school when he was second year high school. Instead, he decided to help his parents to meet their daily needs.

At a young age, he decided to find his luck in Manila. But with lack of education, he found it difficult to land a decent job that will sustain his needs in the city.

“Kabudlay kaayo nga wala ka iniskwelahan. Mabudlay mangita trabaho (Life without education is difficult, even finding a job is hard),” Danny lamented.

Thanks to the people who helped him. While working, he enrolled in a bible school to feed his spiritual side that enabled him to learn valuable lessons that will guide him in his ambition to help others in his place. He realized that he is an ordinary Obu man with extraordinary attributes and special aspirations who went on to conquer his dreams in the midst of poverty.

VOLUNTEERISM FOR A CAUSE

When Danny went back to Lake Sebu, he volunteered to the government’s community-driven development program, Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan - A Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS). It is a social infrastructure program implemented by the Department that aims to involve barangays and targeted municipalities in local planning, budgeting, and implementation.

“Kung dati, nagareklamo kami na hindi maabot sang gobyerno ang mga ka-tribu namon sa bukid, karon gitagaan na kami opportunity nga makakuha mga projects (We used to lament before that government services were not accessible but this time, we were given the opportunity to access programs and services),” Danny explained.

Danny became a chairperson of the barangay sub-project management committee (BSPMC), a community group responsible for the overall planning, operations and implementation of community projects that they have chosen to implement in their village.

Lamfugon villagers were able to avail a solar drier with warehouse amounting to P1.3 million. The said project enabled to help Obu farmers to increase their income by improving the quality of their farm produce before selling it to market.

The village also was able to benefit from a box culvert bridge project amounting to P600,000. The project is considered to be one of the most vital social infrastructures built in the village. The river located in the entrance area of the village had caused the residents to be isolated during rainy seasons when the flood water overflows.

A total of 27 carabaos were also given to the villagers through the Kalahi-CIDSS Program amounting to P1.1 million.

“Ang mga karabaw nga ini dako nga bulig sa amon pangabuhian (These carabaos are of great help in our livelihood activities),” Danny said.

The volunteerism efforts of Danny, together with the Obu villagers have successfully paid off.



UNIVERSITY FOR THE BARRIO

Danny, as a community volunteer, has encouraged the Obu tribe to take the opportunity to learn from the various trainings and capability building activities in the village.

Dannysaid that 70% of the Obu population in the villages is illiterate. With this, Danny took the opportunity to integrate literacy sessions with the Kalahi-CIDSS meetings, assemblies and trainings. With the help of the Department of Education (DepEd), he volunteered to organize alternative learning and distance education program for the tribe.

In the past, according to Danny, the voices of Obu tribe were not heard. They had to fight to have the chance to speak up and make a contribution to the development of the town.

“Gitudluan kami sang DSWD sang mga bagay nga sa eskwelahan mo lang matun-an (DSWD taught us many things that are usually learned inside the classroom),” Danny said.

The villagers underwent various trainings including planning, proposal development, project prioritization, procurement, financial management, bookkeeping, auditing, and many other community development components.

However, the most important learning from the various activities is the transformation of the tribe’s mindset about their roles, as an actor rather than an audience, of development through their collective actions, participation and empowerment.

Danny after his years of volunteerism efforts, has been appointed as barangay planning and development coordinator, focal person of Lake Sebu Ancestral Domain Community Affair, barangay secretary and administrative aid in the provincial social welfare and development office.

With his experiences, as an advocate of research and preservation of the tribe’s practices, he authored the Customary Law of Obu Tribe in Lake Sebu that has been the guiding principle in cultural and customary practices of the tribe.

HELP AMID PANDEMIC

As a tribal leader, Danny ensured that no one is left behind during the pandemic.

As the lockdowns continue, with no definite timeline in sight, Obu villagers, working in traditional occupations and subsistence farming, were confronted by the challenges with the loss of their traditional livelihoods, access to food, and services.

“May mga panahon nga indi kami makapagawas sang amon mga produkto kay limitado ang mga movement sa munisipyo (There are several instances when we cannot sell our products due to limited movements and only essential goods are allowed to be transported),” Danny said.

Danny, together with barangay officials and community volunteers, has initiated information dissemination activities for the Obu villagers about the COVID-19 effects on their health.

It was also noted that Lamfugon residents have availed the Social Amelioration Program (SAP), a cash subsidy to low-income families to provide marginalized sectors the means to afford basic needs during the pandemic.

Danny also facilitated the help from the Department of Labor and Employment’s cash-for-work program and the Department of Agriculture’s cash assistance to the Obu tribe members of Lamfugon.

NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF DREAM

The volunteerism initiatives of Danny have rewarded him with so many opportunities in life.

As a second year high school dropout, Danny has limited work opportunities compared to other individuals of his age. As a volunteer-organizer of distance education, he took the Accreditation and Equivalency Examination which he passed, certifying him as a high school graduate.

As an advocate of the preservation of customary and cultural practices of tribes in Lake Sebu, he was elected as Indigenous Peoples Structure (IPS) chairperson of some 11,000 members of Obu tribe in Lake Sebu.

“Kaya ako naga-volunteer para indi na maagyan sang bag-o nga henerasyon namon ang naagyan namon dati nga kabudlay kag masigurado ko nga mahatag man sa amon na tribu ang mga serbisyo kag oportunidad ngadapatsaamon. Kag labaw sa tanan, mabal-an nila ang ila responsibilidad kag karapatan bilang miyembro sang komunidad (I decided to be a volunteer to ensure that our new generation of Obu can avail to the government services so they will not experience hardships. Above all they must also know their responsibility and rights as a member of our community),” Danny said.

At 45, Danny is finishing his Bachelor of Science in Community Development in one of the colleges in South Cotabato.

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Mother UNMASKS sewing skills to SURVIVE pandemic

LUTAYAN, Sultan Kudarat – When COVID-19 hit the nation, affecting millions of families with strict border lockdown and quarantine, the life of Rona Umadhay, 51, mother of two (2), turned upside down.

The pandemic brought Rona's family with uncertainty, a feeling that gave her no assurance on what will happen after several months after the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rona recalled when the lockdown in her town started, she was too worried and felt unsafe even though she is inside their house. For her, it is not the virus that she is concerned about, but her family's survival to have food on the table for the next couple of months.

"I was anxious for my family's safety, but I am more fearful that one day, we will end up with nothing to eat," Rona lamented while she also felt devastated having thought that her husband has been laid off from work due to pandemic.

But a great idea came into the mind of a struggling mother to protect her family. Rona thought of starting sewing face masks made of cloth as an income to the family in this trying time.

SKILLS FOR SURVIVAL

In 2016, Rona underwent a NC II skills training on dressmaking conducted by Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) through the agency's Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP). Rona has successfully gained skills and techniques in dressmaking and tailoring as she realized that this would open for an opportunity at the height of the pandemic.

After completing the training, the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII) provided her with a sewing machine to start her tailoring livelihood. Her little business started from few demands from customers on sewing curtains and simple repairing of pants.

After years of working hard, she acquired another two (2) new sets of sewing machines to help her cope with the increasing demand from the customers. Rona was able to sustain her income until one day when pandemic led to a dramatic loss of her income that affected the entire family's daily needs.

"I have a stable income before the pandemic, but when the virus spread, it started to diminish," she said.

Assistance coming from local government units came at the right time. According to Rona, their daily needs particularly food that was provided by the government have saved her family during the lockdowns due to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in the area.

Rona's family was one of the beneficiaries of the Social Amelioration Program (SAP), a cash subsidy to low-income families to provide marginalized sectors of the country the means to afford basic needs during the pandemic.

Through SAP, her family received P5,000 cash assistance. Unlike others, Rona utilized the money to venture for another livelihood, the face mask production and vending.

"Everyone in the family had important tasks to do. Our two children ensured accurate measurement of materials before my husband and I sewed it to make certain that our products are of good quality," Rona happily recalled.

Rona added that there were instances that they need to work overtime to cope with the demand of customers from various parts of South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat provinces.

From a measly P200-P300 per day before the pandemic, Rona's daily income rose from P2,000 to P3,000 from March to May 2020.



“

I was anxious for my family's safety, but I am more fearful that one day, we will end up with nothing to eat.

SURVIVING IN TIGHT COMPETITION

With the surge of COVID-19 cases, face masks have become indispensable things amid the pandemic. Suddenly, face mask making became a livelihood hit for tailors.

“The competition became apparent that it affected much of our daily income,” she said.

Despite that, there was a continuing increase in the number of people who are looking for surgical masks with its cheap price compare to cloth face masks, in which Rona’s tailoring was producing and selling.

Rona did not lose her hope despite the presence of newly-opened tailoring shops. Applying the learning during Dressmaking NCII training and with the guide of DSWD-SLP staff, they persevered to look for other customers and resellers to regularly sell their locally-produced masks.

With the decrease in daily income, Rona was able to generate savings to repair their old and dilapidated house.

“It was a dream come true. The struggles that we have to go through became an opportunity for us to repair our house,” she said.

LIVELIHOOD ASSISTANCE

SLP is a capability-building program for poor, vulnerable and marginalized households like Rona

and communities to improve their socio-economic conditions through accessing and acquiring assets to engage in and maintain thriving livelihoods.

“SLP is our way to uphold the value of inclusiveness by providing an opportunity to poor, marginalized vulnerable, and disadvantaged households, building upon their strengths and understanding how they can use these to achieve positive livelihood outcomes,” Edgar Guerra, the SLP regional program coordinator.

Guerra added that it is part of the DSWD’s initiative to reinforce principles of community empowerment and participatory development into program implementation to increase the level of participation among program participants and harness a deeper sense of ownership of their development.

Meanwhile, in 2020, SLP has reached a total of 1,572 beneficiaries to ease their livelihood situation brought about by the pandemic.

“One of the thrusts of the agency is to reach poor families involved in micro, small, medium enterprises (MSMEs) to ensure that the poor have economic opportunities despite the pandemic,” Guerra said.

As for Rona, the assistance she received from the DSWD amid the pandemic will be a lifetime gift she will remember for the rest of her life, a story worth retelling now how the government ensured that no one will be left behind and will have comfortable lives amid crisis.



Gensan folks start breeding RABBITS as alternative LIVELIHOOD

GENERAL SANTOS CITY - As dawn breaks on a foggy morning in this outskirts village of the city, Ronald Dela Cruz Rodriquez started preparing his 13 fluffy rabbits with snow-white fur that he raised in the last four months. A prospective buyer will get all of them before noontime.

Rodriquez, 42 and a father to two children – aged 16 and 12 – placed his rabbits on a pet travel carrier cage hours before he will go to the village center where he will meet the buyer for the payoff.

Rodriquez has been working at a small paper box factory downtown but his income is not enough to cover their daily needs.

He explained that the additional source of income from raising rabbits was a big help for his family.

“I have not tried the meat but according to others, it tastes like chicken. Just like chickens, rabbits are easy and reasonably affordable to raise that is why it’s easy to make money out of it,” he said in Filipino.

Later in the day, he met his buyer at the village proper, where he was paid P3,900 for the 13 rabbits.

“The important thing here we have additional income considering our current situation with the pandemic,” he added.



1,572
Households trained with seed
capital under regular SLP

11,091
Livelihood Assistance Grant (LAG)
beneficiaries served

Natividad Occeña, 50, a resident of Barangay Ligaya, also in General Santos City, said she earned around P3,600 from four months of raising two rabbits.

"Having passive income nowadays is a great favor already," Occeña said.

Last year, due to a spike of the African swine fever cases across the country that affected small and big hog industries, the government pushed to make rabbit meat as an alternative food.

"It's low in fat and high in protein. With that, it's healthier than pork and chicken," Kristopher Catigbe, a livestock inspector of General Santos City Veterinary Office said.

Usually cheap, pork meat is primary in the Filipino diet. However, the price went up due to African Swine fever (ASF), a highly contagious and deadly disease among pigs – wiping out hog stocks.

In 2019, the country was also hit hard by culls that occur in the aftermath of outbreaks.

Occeña and Rodriguez were just among the 17,171 qualified individuals that managed to receive assistance under the Livelihood Assistance Grant (LAG), as part of the Social Amelioration Program under the recovery phase to help marginalized sectors in the society.

Meanwhile, Bonifacio V. Selma Jr., assistant regional director of DSWD FO XII, said that LAG recipients were market and street vendors, including those belonging to informal economy sectors such as self-employed or those working in family workshops, jeepney drivers, rural workers like fisherfolks, and farmers.

The financial aid was based on the Omnibus Guidelines in the Implementation of Emergency Subsidy Program of DSWD, an intervention based on the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act (RA 11469) signed by President Rodrigo Duterte.



Organizational Outcome 2:

Rights of the poor and vulnerable sectors promoted and protected

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A CICL now a PASTOR and a SOCIAL WORKER





Building a family's hope amidst the COVID-19 PANDEMIC

GENERAL SANTOS CITY – Every day, 65-year-old Veronica Piloton wakes up as early as 4:00 at dawn to start collecting junks and be able to feed her family. They live in a small house mostly made from sawali (woven bamboo mats) in the riverside area of Barangay City Heights, in this city.

For 20 years, Veronica and her husband, Venancio, 68, have worked as junk collectors in their area. By 3:00 in the afternoon, they take home between P120-P150 if they collect two sacks of plastics. Too little to sustain the needs of their family and certainly not enough to repair their house's tattered roof.

Due to poverty, Veronica and her family eat only twice a day, purposely timed at 10:00 in the morning and 5:00 in the evening. They would buy rice with their income from collecting junks and pair that with spinach that they grow in their backyard. There are days when they could only sprinkle a pinch of salt in their rice to ease the hunger.

"Swerte na mi kung makapalit mi og sardinas o noodles kay lami among panlasa sa kinaon (It's already a luxury for us if we can buy a can of sardines or instant noodles once in a while)," Veronica said.



After receiving the emergency cash assistance of P5,000, Mrs. Piloton along with her son carried their newly purchased roof for their home.

During rainy seasons, family members would stay up all night, gather themselves in one corner of the house because their roof leaks when the rains are heavy.

"Halos di mi katulog kung mokusog ang ulan kay maguol mi nga mangabasa ang among mga gamit (We would be awakened by the leaks and have to gather and protect our things from the rain)," Lola Veronica said.

HELP COMES THEIR WAY

The Piloton family was among the identified beneficiaries of the local government unit's assistance through the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

From the P5,000 direct financial aid, the Piloton family prioritized buying grocery items and a sack of rice to ensure they have food while lockdowns prohibit them from earning.

Veronica allotted the remaining cash grant to purchase roofing materials from the nearest hardware in their area. It was a dream come true for her to change their roof since their income of P500 per week can only provide for their food and essential needs.

"Sobra among kalipay sa amoang bag-ong atop. Makatulog na kami nga malinawon bisan pa man moulán og kusog (I am very happy with our new roof. We can now rest well at night even if there's heavy rain)," Veronica added.

Rebecca Magante, head of the City's Social Welfare Office, sent technical staff to inspect the household and ensure that the beneficiaries they selected deserved the assistance.

"If you look at the photos of their houses, you will wonder how they survive their daily life," Magante cited.

The Piloton family was among the 111,230 poor households identified by LGU Gensan who received SAP cash assistance during the first tranche of the cash distribution during the second quarter of 2020.

Cezario Joel Espejo, regional director of the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII), commended their effort to inspect each household to ensure help comes to those in dire need.

"When you put food on the table of these families and roof over their head, they will feel empowered and hopeful. Hopefully, we uplift their spirit to persevere against life's challenges," Espejo cited.



“

Because of poverty, Veronica and her family eat only twice a day during 10am and 5pm – usually with spinach that grow aplenty in their backyard. There were moments that they would even sprinkle a pinch of salt in their rice when hunger strikes them.





HONESTY in the midst of PANDEMIC

MAGPET, North Cotabato — When authorities imposed a total lockdown, Whendy Pido foresees a looming crisis that could terribly affect the daily needs of her family.

A mother to a ten-year-old boy, Whendy says at first she thought the enhanced community lockdown implemented by their local government officials could only last for few weeks but it lasted for several months, a decision made by authorities limiting movements of people as part of efforts to flatten the increasing spread of deadly coronavirus.

In the small village of Del Pilar where Whendy stays with her son in a wooden-made house surrounded by rubber trees, most of the people fell into grimmer

poverty as the virus continues to rage, preventing residents by local law enforcers to go out from their homes to work.

According to Whendy, their local official allows them to work, at least they have something on their table at the end of the day, a daily scene for most of the people which only adds desperation and anxiety making it difficult to have a sense of the importance of the strict adherence to the lockdown.

Over the weekend, residents in the town saw a shimmer of hope after the local government unit of Antipas, a mountain town in North Cotabato province, began the distribution of the government's emergency subsidy under the Social Amelioration Program (SAP).

The intervention, spearheaded by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) under the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act (RA 11469) signed by President Rodrigo Duterte on March 25, 2020, with P200 billion funding, primarily aimed to ease the effects of the enhanced community quarantine.

The assistance will benefit the poorest of the poor and informal economy sectors of society like Whendy, a full-time housewife who only relies on the income of her husband working as a laborer in one of the rubber farms close to their village.

Whendy was among the residents provided by P5,000 cash assistance under SAP. However, upon knowing that her husband, who was in an adjacent village, was also provided with the same assistance, she immediately returned the money.

The money could have gone a long way for her family, as the enhanced community quarantine continues to remain in effect until April 30, 2020. She could have kept the money depriving those poor residents who are equally in need of assistance like her.

However, Whendy realized how insensitive she could be – knowing that there are more poor families in their barangays who barely have food to eat due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It would be a huge help to my neighbors who have not yet received support from the government. I know we might land in jail if I would not return the money," she quipped after the payout in their village on Sunday afternoon.

She thanked the government for the timely assistance extended to them saying, "our government has compassion in helping those poor families who are economically displaced by COVID-19 pandemic."

"Thank you President Duterte because with our present condition now, you did not leave us alone. The money is a big help for us who have no source of income in this trying time," she said.

"To my neighbors, if the assistance given to you was doubled, please return it. It's not good if you get twice while others have nothing on their table," she concluded.

Other sectors in the community in the town who received the same assistance as Whendy were senior citizens, PWDs, pregnant women, solo parents, overseas Filipinos in distress, indigenous people, homeless citizens, farmers, fishermen, and self-employed.

“
Our government has compassion
in helping those poor families
who are economically displaced by
COVID-19 pandemic.





CELEBRATING A LIFE WELL LIVED: Lola Kauya's secret to longevity

LEBAK, Sultan Kudarat - Across the world, life expectancy is lower than 100 years. In the Philippines, according to the 2019 World Development Index published by the World Bank, the life expectancy of males is 66 years old while females can reach 72 years old. This means Filipinos have an average life expectancy of 69 years old.

Yet, some exceptional people live for decades. And yes, their lives are indeed worth celebrating.

As part of the government's holistic approach in providing programs and services targeting the older sector, the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII) has been implementing the Republic Act No. 10868, also known as the Centenarian Act of 2016.

This year, one of the country's centenarians lives along the highway of Barangay Marigaig, Lebak, Sultan Kudarat. She is Lola Kauya Ali Talib, an Iranon woman who just turned 102 years old.

On November 20, 2020, the DSWD FO XII staff visited Lola Kauya in Lebak and awarded her a centenarian gift of P100,000 with the assistance of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) and Local Government Unit (LGU) of Lebak that also handed her P10,000 of cash assistance.

Beauty fades away with time, but character remains forever for Lola Kauya. Her family admired her so much for Lola Kauya's sweetness and gentleness despite her condition having weak thighs and legs.

As she received the centenarian gift, Lola Kauya was sitting on her bed.

She gave the DSWD staff a sweet smile and whisper her endless "Thank you."

She even started sharing how she reached the age of 102. Her secret for long life is to eat nutritious food. She eats vegetables and meat without salt and added preservatives.

Lola Kauya also shared how proud she is for her granddaughter Sharifa Akeel, the first Muslim Filipina Beauty Queen who won Miss Asia Pacific International in 2018.

Lola shared that when Sharifa was young, she took care of her like her own daughter. She also used to accompany her in pageants and supported Sharifa in all her endeavors.

Everyone was enthralled while listening to Lola Kauya's stories. Unlike other elders, she has no medications except for vitamins, and she also has a very sharp memory.

According to her daughter Sarah, they will use the money to buy comfortable bed and vitamins for her. The rest will be Lola's savings. Sarah hopes that God will provide her mother with more birthdays to celebrate.

As reported in the 2020 data of DSWD FO XII, 54 centenarians received a cash gift of P100,000. This number is only 5.48 percent of 985 elders who are centenarians in the Philippines this year.

The LGU, through the local social welfare and development office, takes the lead in the identification and validation of beneficiaries.

The Department facilitates the provision of a cash gift and the letter of felicitation from President Rodrigo Duterte.

DSWD, as part of its mandate, will continue to serve the needs of indigent elders.

As she received the centenarian gift, Lola Kauya was just sitting on her bed. She gave the DSWD staff sweet smile and whisper her endless "Thank you".





SAP helps solo parent SURVIVE the PANDEMIC

GENERAL SANTOS CITY - When the Local Government Unit (LGU) announced the need for a border lockdown due to the increasing number COVID-19 cases, Ernesto Dalipe Jr. can't help but ask himself, "how can my daughter and I survive this pandemic?"

Dalipe, also known as 'Totong' by his neighbors, a solo parent who has been working as scavenger for more than a decade. On regular days, he collects discarded items and sells them to the junkyards for recycling. His take-home pay ranges from P150-180 per day, big enough to pay their house rental of P500/month.

But with the lockdowns and movement restrictions around the city, he cannot earn that income and find it difficult to put food on the table for him and his daughter, Anjielou.

"Sanay akong mag-isa sa pag-aalaga sa aking anak pero hindi ako sanay na alagaan sya sa panahon ng krisis kung saan hindi puwedeng lumabas ng bahay para maghanap ng mapagkakakitaan (I have always taken care of my own daughter but I am not prepared to face this crisis where I can't go out to earn for our daily needs)," Totong said.

Totong decided to temporarily relocate his daughter, Anjielou, to his mother's house in Sarangani Province, 80 kilometers from where he currently lives.

"Kung doon siya sa probinsya, malaya siyang makapaglaro at makalanghap ng sariwang hangin. (With my mother in the province, my daughter can play and breathe fresh air in our hometown)," he added.

HOUSE TO HOUSE SAP DISTRIBUTION

On May 7, 2020, workers from the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII) reached Totong's house at Barangay City Heights to deliver the emergency cash subsidy under the government's Social Amelioration Program (SAP).

Totong's family was among the identified beneficiaries of the SAP, a program under Republic Act 11469 or the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act which provides a P5,000 cash subsidy, based on regional minimum wage rates. SAP has been instrumental in the survival of thousands of low-income families during the lockdowns and enhanced community quarantine due to pandemic.

"The bright smile and thankful gestures of Kuya Totong motivated us, DSWD workers, to continue being in the frontline service despite the hazards of the pandemic," said Dante E. Dante, the project development officer of DSWD FO XII assigned to conduct the house-to-house visits.

DSWD FO XII employees tagged as "angels in red vest" were inspired by the reaction of Totong as he received aid from the government. He said it would help provide not just his needs but that of Anjielou and his mother in Sarangani province during the community quarantine.

"The agency knows that the program may not reach all poor households but hopes that those who have received cash assistance can share with those who have nothing. Such sharing, whether big or small, will surely help Filipino families bounce back from the devastating impacts of COVID-19," Naira Aratuc said, chief, Protective Services Division of DSWD FO XII.

"Survivors of this pandemic have one thing in common, they have the desire to provide everything for the people they love. Witnessing the bright, genuine smile of beneficiaries like Totong gives the angels in red vest the extra strength and motivation to continue the challenging, yet fulfilling work," Aratuc concluded.

Ernesto C. Dalipe Jr., a solo parent from Brgy. City Heights in General Santos City welcomes 'Angels in Red Vest' with a bright smile.



A CICL now a PASTOR and a SOCIAL WORKER

POLOMOLOK, South Cotabato - Pastor Eli Balogo Jr., a former child in conflict with the law (CICL), is now happy serving the church and sharing the word of God to kids during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At his lowest point, teenage Eli was into stealing, gambling, and taking drugs to feel “normal”.

He also sold illegal drugs and, at one point, faced a possible jail sentence.

Born in the said Municipality, Eli began committing some of the most brazen crimes when he was 13, initially because he was curious and had fallen in with like-minded friends.

“From what I can remember, my parents always fought and argued about something. I can relate more to my peers who came from broken families, and I thought their life was easier than mine. I envied friends who were lucky enough to experience having proper guidance from their parents,” he said.

“My friends were my core. I considered them my family more than my own family. I liked being with my friends all the time. We tried smoking, drinking alcohol, gambling, stealing, and even taking illegal drugs. I was so lost, I knew that but I had nowhere to go,” he added.

By now, Eli has shared his story countless times. Whenever someone reacts to his childhood story with sympathy, he always felt a little perplexed. For him, he was just being a kid. And just like any other kid, he was vulnerable, trusting, and open to life.

Fortunately for Eli, everything changed when he stayed at Bahay Pag-asa in General Santos City, a juvenile intervention and support center that caters to children in conflict with the law. There, he met people who inspired him to change.

“The center (Bahay Pag-asa) is like a home to me. I met several people there



who truly inspired me to be better and be the best version of myself,” he pointed out.

During his stay at the center, Eli often thought about his brother. He had realized then that he still had a family whom he can lean on. The thought of being with his brother again, inspired him to change and start over.

“Every day, my brother inspires me to be better and live with purpose. I want to serve the people, do social work, and I want to inspire children,” Pastor Eli added.

After staying at the center for two years, Eli finished his Bachelor of Science in Social Work in General Santos City.

He was happy to serve and help people as a social worker but wanted to fulfill his dream of inspiring more children and leading them to the right path. That was when he decided to serve the church by becoming a Pastor.

Eli’s Senior Pastor, Rodolfo Estoloso testifies to all his hard work. He is also Eli’s spiritual and life mentor.

“

From what I can remember, my parents always fought and argued about something. I considered myself as someone who grew up in a broken family. That’s when I realized, I’m not lucky enough to experience having proper guidance from my parents.

"I have known Eli for quite a while. I know what he has been through and all his struggles. I am happy that he is now serving God and serving the people, especially the kids. Being a Pastor and social worker is not an easy task, but he managed to do it. Of course, with God's grace and guidance," Senior Pastor Estoloso said.

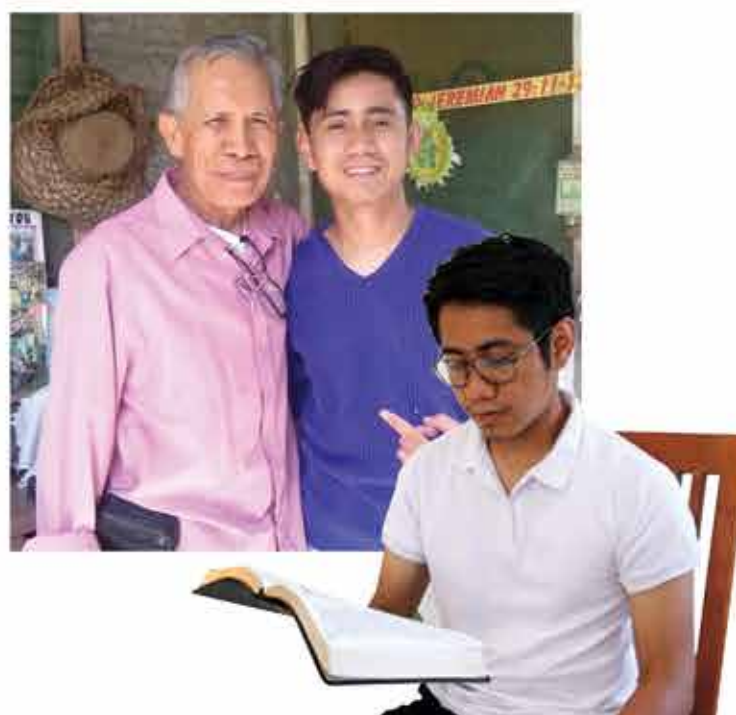
Even in the middle of the pandemic, Eli continues to share God's words with the children in Polomolok. By sharing his experience, Eli hopes that the children would learn from his life's lessons.

"The greatest thing that happened to me is being given a chance to reform. I realized and accepted that I needed help to fix myself and my life," Estoloso added.

Eli is a living proof that having an intervention and support center for the youth offenders can save young lives like him.

Apart from sharing God's word, Eli is also doing volunteerism efforts in the distribution of food packs to families affected by the border lockdowns.

In the future, he aims to be employed as a regular social worker by the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII).



12

Number of Accredited
Centers
and
Institutions



CENTERS AND INSTITUTIONS

Organizational Outcome 3:

Immediate relief and early recovery of
disaster victims/survivors ensured

36 RISING from a catastrophe:
Story of the victims of
CALAMITY in the
MIDDLE OF PANDEMIC



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of community
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CRISIS response
TIMELINE

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start NEW LIVES as farmers



RISING from a catastrophe: Story of the victims of CALAMITY in the MIDDLE OF PANDEMIC

KABACAN, North Cotabato - On a gloomy morning, Lola Noraida Macalipat is patiently waiting in the covered community center of Sitio Malabuaya for the distribution of family food packs and plastic mats from Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII).

Lola Noraida is one of the thousands affected by flash floods in North Cotabato. She lives with her daughter and grandchildren with their sari-sari store as their source of income.

She is used to seeing their barangay transformed into a virtual sea whenever they experience heavy rains.

In October 2020, however, brown water rose quickly, spreading fast in her village. The deluge swallowed even some dry areas in Kabacan.

"Our situation here is difficult whenever it rains. We are living in a flood-prone area, but we can't leave this place because we have nowhere to go," Macalipat said.

More than a thousand families in North Cotabato are greatly affected by weather disturbances that cause significant damage to people's lives and livelihoods.

It has been a tough and challenging year for these families. Due to multiple typhoons and tropical storms, these communities are more vulnerable than ever to the COVID-19 disease.

"It's even harder for us now because we are still in the middle of a pandemic. We don't know how and when to start again, but we are hopeful that we will get through this," Macalipat added.

Fortunately, the DSWD FO XII has constantly been extending its help and meeting the needs of the families affected by the calamities.

"We are going to keep on providing augmentation support to LGUs to help people in need who are affected by calamities," Jackiya Lao said, chief, Disaster Response and Management Division of DSWD FO XII.

FILIPINO RESILIENCY

Meanwhile, for Macalipat, the government's response has been helpful. She said they were able to get immediate support, and that is something that warms their heart.

"Thank you for not forgetting us! Thank you, DSWD," Macalipat said.

"It is not a secret that the Filipino people are resilient. We can withstand earthquakes and flash floods brought by several typhoons every year. DSWD FO XII has integrated disaster preparedness training activities for disaster-prone areas in partnership with barangay workers and the LGU," Lao added.

"The rebuilding process may take months or years, and more medium-term investments in livelihoods, education, and disaster risk reduction remain to be done. But what keeps us moving forward is that unbreakable Filipino spirit; that unique brand of resilience now known the world over," Lao concluded.



Hundreds of Family Food Packs and Non-food items ready to augment to families affected by flash-floods in North Cotabato.



An unseen smile behind the mask of a 60-year old, Noraida Macalipat, when she receives a plastic mat and family food packs after a destructive flash flood hit their town.





After the successive earthquakes in Mindanao in 2019, affected families from Kidapawan City organized community gardening through the Cash-For-Work Program of DSWD.

The healing POWER of community GARDENING

KIDAPAWAN CITY, North Cotabato - Christopher Damali, a father of two (2) children in Sitio Embasi, Barangay Perez in this city, spent most of his life growing plants from seeds to harvest.

Farming is the main economic activity in their barangay. They have the best weather for farming which results in bountiful crops and abundant harvest. The community in the said town was just contented with the simple life they have.

Then in October 2019, a string of powerful earthquakes shook Mindanao including Kidapawan City, North Cotabato.

The first earthquake happened on October 16 with a 6.3-magnitude earthquake followed by a magnitude-6.6 quake on October 29 and a 6.5-magnitude aftershock on October 31. The series of earthquakes ruined old and new buildings and infrastructure and also claimed lives.

But the people of Kidapawan rebuilt their communities – and their lives – even stronger than before the earthquake.

A year after the destructive earthquake, some families slowly restored their daily lives by reconnecting with others, repairing their homes, and rebuilding their communities.

SEASONS OF FARMING

Damali's family is one of the earthquake survivors in Kidapawan City who is still staying and building their lives anew in the evacuation area.

"As much as we want to go back to our homes, our safety is our priority. We are trying to make a new life here and are slowly making a recovery," Damali said.

Most of the displaced families are trying to get their life back on track. Relying on planting and harvesting seasons, farmers need critical government support.

BRINGING A COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Through the coordination of the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) in Kidapawan to the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII), displaced families were encouraged to participate in community-defined projects and generate temporary employment.

More than 1,250 residents from the villages of Ilomavis, Perez, and Balabag were hired for a 10-day under the agency's cash-for-work (CFW) scheme.

Affected families from Kidapawan City decided to pursue a community gardening project. Aside from the cash assistance they receive from the agency, they also earn by selling their extra products such as tomatoes, cucumber, pear squash, cabbage, and many more.

After the 10-day CFW, each of the beneficiaries received P2,330 or 75% of the regional prevailing minimum wage which is P233/day.

The assistance is part of the government's support to help them rebuild their lives.

FOOD SECURITY

The program also strives to provide long-term food security by supporting local agriculture projects while also resolving economic, social, and environmental problems.

Anchored in 2008 Administrative Order No. 15, the agency has started providing CFW to residents selected by the local government units to work on a series of projects in hazard and risk villages vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

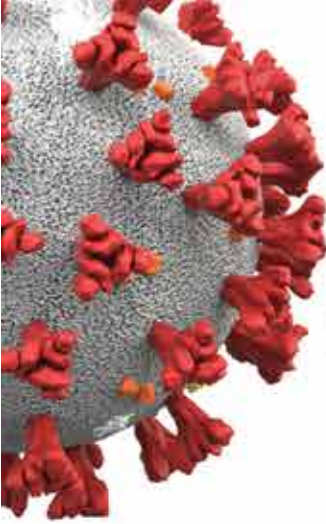
The project beneficiaries can use the money to cover their daily needs amid the COVID-19 pandemic where the majority of them lost their jobs due to strict movement restrictions that severely affected business operations.

For the affected residents of Kidapawan City and beneficiaries of CFW, the program does not only help them financially, but it also allows them greater involvement in community-building.



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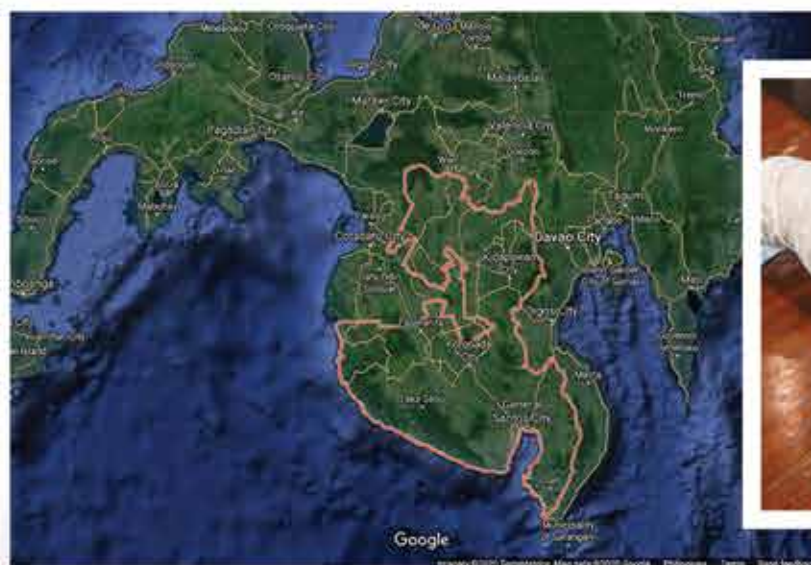
Damali is one of the earthquake survivors from Kidapawan City who is still staying and building their new lives in the evacuation area.



COVID-19: CRISIS Response TIMELINE

- The Philippines has been grappling with the COVID-19 epidemic for more than a year, with communities facing rising infections. The first case of the disease was confirmed on January 30, 2020, in a 38-year old Chinese woman.

- The virus reached Soccsksargen on March 17, 2020, when the disease's first case was confirmed in Cotabato City.
- COVID-19 has spread to all component local government units in the region, confirming the first case in South Cotabato in third week of March 2020 and in General Santos City and Cotabato province in April 2020. Sarangani's first case was recorded in May 2020.



- The Disaster Response and Management Division (DRMD) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII) has provided food assistance to all municipalities and cities in the region, including Cotabato City.
- The agency extended the provision of food packs to families affected by the COVID- 19. A total of 69,054 family food packs and 1,700 sacks of rice were distributed in the whole region.
- Part of the target of DSWD FO XII assistance are the Locally Stranded Individuals (LSIs) and Returned Overseas Filipinos (ROFs) who were held to undergo quarantine.
- The country has implemented cash transfer programs to support the displaced and the vulnerable. The government was quick to enact a law to alleviate the public health crisis. Among the most salient features of the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act was the allocation of P199.975 billion to the DSWD to fund its Social Amelioration Program (SAP).
- In May 2020, the Department fully disbursed its total allocation for SAP in Region XII. The funding benefitted poor and qualified families across the region.
- The agency tapped financial service providers (FSP) such as Western Union, Cebuana, and M-Lhuillier to hasten cash assistance payment for thousands of qualified SAP clients in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.



- Aside from the subsidies provided, DSWD FO XII spent more than P272.1 million under the agency's emergency assistance fund to respond to thousands of people's urgent needs across the region.
- The national government continues to assist the Filipinos' economic recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic. DSWD FO XII ensures the continued provision of social protection programs to affected families as stipulated in Republic Act No. 11494 or the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act (Bayanihan 2).



Decommissioned combatants start NEW LIVES as farmers

DATU ODIN SINSUAT, Maguindanao – When the sun started to shine early in the morning, a new hope started to arise in the life of Tatay Kagi, a 73-year-old decommissioned combatant of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Tatay Kagi, not his real name, starts to work in his farm lot in the far-flung area in Barangay Badak, in the said municipality. He cuts grasses and prepares the lot to be used in farming and planting corn.

Tatay Kagi recalls his journey while he was still in the group, "We always lived in the forest to protect ourselves from the military, for how many years we served the group."

"Our way of survival in the forest is to plant our food," Tatay Kagi added.

For 40 years, he had been accustomed to living in the forest and planting root crops for survival as he served under the wing of the MILF in their area.

When asked why Tatay Kagi joined the group, he said he needed to protect his ancestral land from the people.

"We need to protect our lands from the invaders. These lands were trusted to us by our ancestors. We will protect this with our life," he explained.

As years passed by and while serving as an active combatant, he married and started his own family even though his family will live with fear because of his work. Now, he is living with his family and three children.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO TURN A NEW PAGE

In 2019, Tatay Kagi was one of the enlisted MILF members who wanted to change his life. Upon decommissioning, he received a total of P100,000 in exchange for choosing a life of non-violence.

He used the money to invest in farming and planting corn and coconut.

"Aside from using the money in farming, I also use it to buy a motorcycle for my family and to easily deliver our products in town," he added.

To reach the town proper in Barangay Badak, Tatay Kagi used to walk a hundred kilometers. There are two decommissioned combatants living in the same area, Tatay Alex, 56 years old, and Tatay Nasser, 60 years old.

Alex and Nasser both joined the MILF in 1983 for training. Just as Tatay Kagi, Alex, and Nasser entered the group to protect their ancestral land from invaders.

Just like Tatay Kagi, Alex and Nasser also invested in farming and livestock.



"I am now living with my family, safe and sound. We are helping each other to raise goat and cow for our survival," Nasser added.

The decommissioned combatants expressed gratitude for their transformation into peaceful and productive members of the communities through the government's Normalization Program.

Normalization Program is a multi-faceted program providing a process to ensure human security in the Bangsamoro and enable the communities to achieve their desired quality of life through the pursuit of sustainable livelihood and political participation.

With this, the weapons that the former combatants used to be a source of power will be put beyond use. They are now equipped with livelihood skills and provided with livelihood support to prepare them for reintegration into mainstream society.

"The amount goes beyond its value. It is a symbol of government serious intention to improve the quality of life of the Bangsamoro people, thus making us feel again that indeed, we belong to the society," Tatay Kagi said with a smile.



3,121
Decommissioned
Combatants

Organizational Outcome 4:

Continuing compliance of social welfare and development agencies to standards in the delivery of social services ensured

46 CHARTING the right
PATH for drug
surrenderers



48 DAYCARE worker
receives
5-STAR rating



CHARTING the right PATH for drug surrenderers

GLAN, Sarangani - The Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII) continues to improve the delivery of services by Local Government Units (LGUs) in assisting recovering persons who use drugs. The agency has issued guidelines on the implementation of the 'Yakap Bayan' Program under Memorandum Circular No. 33 series of 2020, an inter-agency collaborative framework that provides rehabilitation, aftercare, transformation, and reintegration support for recovering drug surrenderers.

“
We want to serve
our respective
communities and
veer them away
from the dangers
of drug addiction.”

After a series of consultation dialogues to address the illegal drug problem in the region, the Anti-Drug Advisory Council and Regional Peace and Order Council (RPOC) approved a resolution urging all local government units in SOCCSKSARGEN to adopt the Yakap Bayan Framework.

Glan town in Sarangani Province is the first one to send a letter of intent to DSWD FO XII to co-pilot the implementation of the flagship program of Yakap Bayan that aims to launch by 2022.

“We want to serve our respective communities and veer them away from the dangers of drug addiction,” Mayor Vivien B. Yap said.

Aside from Glan, the other municipalities and cities in the region had signed a Memorandum of Agreement with DSWD FO XII including Kidapawan City, Columbio, and Bagumbayan in Sultan Kudarat, and Surallah in South Cotabato.

“We, in Glan, Sarangani Province, know the struggles of our drug surrenderers that they can’t find a stable job because of the stigma that they are using drugs before. We want them to become productive members of the society,” Nemesia Gavica, the municipal social welfare and development head said.

A SECOND CHANCE FOR DRUG OFFENDERS

Under the Yakap Bayan Framework, drug surrenderers receive various interventions such as medical treatment and rehabilitation, psychosocial interventions, skills training, and leadership training.

Ryan Balanza, planning officer of Social Technology Program applies the whole-of-government approach in intensifying its advocacies to help in addressing the concerns related to the use and abuse of illegal drugs.

“*Ang layunin ng Yakap Bayan ay makonekta natin ang mga programa ng probinsya, ng pulis, ng AFP, ng Bureau of Fire Protection, ng BJMP, ng TESDA, ng DOLE, ng DSWD at ng iba pang mga ahensya tungo sa iisang adhikain na magabayan ang ating mga former drug offenders* (The intention of the Yakap Bayan program is to connect the programs of the province, the police, the AFP, the Bureau of Fire Protection, BJMP, TESDA, DOLE, and DSWD),” Balanza said.

Apart from the technical assistance, the DSWD FO XII will help the drug surrenderers in enhancing their community-based skills by referring them to the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) in which they can avail Livelihood Skills Training such as Goat Raising, Native Chicken Production, Vegetable Farming, and Hog Raising.

Part of the program is the surprise drug test to monitor the surrenderers that they are no longer into using illegal drugs.

Highlighting the reintegration program, Yakap Bayan does not only intend to improve the recovery skills of their beneficiaries, but also prioritizes their health condition especially this time of the pandemic.

“We are doing our best to reach our communities through their Provincial, Municipal, and Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Councils and provide them with the information and knowledge that they could use for them to better address the illegal drug problem in their respective areas,” Balanza said.

With the pre-implementation stage of the Yakap Bayan Framework in SOCCSKSARGEN, DSWD FO XII continues to engage other localities to collaborate and empower citizens who were once affected by drugs by allowing them to become volunteers and leaders in their communities.

DAYCARE worker receives 5-STAR rating

KABACAN, North Cotabato - Nida Manuel is a registered Child Development Teacher (CDT) in the municipality. She handles an average of 40 children per academic year in the 180 sqm. daycare center in Barangay Kayaga.



She has worked as a day care teacher since 1985. When her husband died In 2001, her teaching profession sustained her three children's studies.

Now that her three children are all professionals, Manuel still teaches at the daycare center, fueled by her passion for education.

"It's not easy to let go of the job that raised your family for 35 years. As long as I can fulfill my duties, I will not leave my job," Manuel said.

Manuel had to immediately comply the documents needed to renew her license as day care teacher set by the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII).

"After preparing the learning modules of our children in the morning, I spent one whole afternoon gathering the needed data for the renewal of our license and accreditation," she added.

THE NEW NORMAL IN ACCREDITATION, REGISTRATION, AND LICENSING

Even as provinces and regions are in different quarantine levels, the DSWD FO XII continued the accreditation and licensing of Child Development Teachers (CDCs) like Nida, despite its staff went through mandatory quarantine.

Unfazed by the new normal challenges, the Department hit its targets in providing an enhanced set of standards for the day care centers and daycare workers.

"The Pandemic did not stop us from achieving our targets. We maximized online platforms like Google Meet to assess, license, and accredit the social welfare and development agencies (SWDAs) in the region. We must work remotely. This is the only way to continue to serve during this pandemic," Camelia Taha, the section head of Licensing and Accreditation of DSWD FO XII explained.

"We thank the SWDAs who have helped us through the process, especially during the border lockdown. We also thank the support of the provincial and municipal social welfare officers in assisting the daycare workers, pre-marriage counselors, and social workers managing court-related cases in complying with the requirements of the Department, as well as providing them strong network connection during the assessment," Taha added.

Daycare teachers like Nida took the assessment and evaluation in December 2020. A team of internal and external evaluators conducted the assessments focusing on the Advancement of Children's



Growth and Development, Partnership with Families and Communities, Human Resource Development, Program Management, and Physical Environment and Safety.

Taha attributed the successful results of the evaluation to the local government's initiative in implementing projects geared towards children's development.

Teacher Nida became the only recipient of a five-star rating among the 17 daycare workers during the accreditation. The five (5) star is equivalent to an outstanding rating, which means that the center she handles follows the highest standards and will be granted a five-year accreditation.

She is grateful for the capacity-building seminars that their LGU provided and the guidance she received from the DSWD FO XII personnel during the evaluation process.

“
Now that her
three (3) children
are all professional,
Manuel still teaches
at the daycare
center, fueled by
her passion for
teaching children.

“Accreditation is only a bonus when seminars and training sessions are offered to us by our LGU in Kabacan and the local child development centers,” Manuel concluded.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

THE COVID-19 pandemic has left government agencies such as the DSWD with no choice but to innovate, using information

and communications technologies to deliver services efficiently to its client-beneficiaries including the children.

Despite the pandemic, the Standards in Licensing and Accreditation will continue fulfilling the regulatory function of the DSWD along with the development of quality assurance measures in the management of SWDAs and the implementation of programs and services for the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized sectors of society.



128
Daycare Workers
accredited

Organizational Outcome 5:

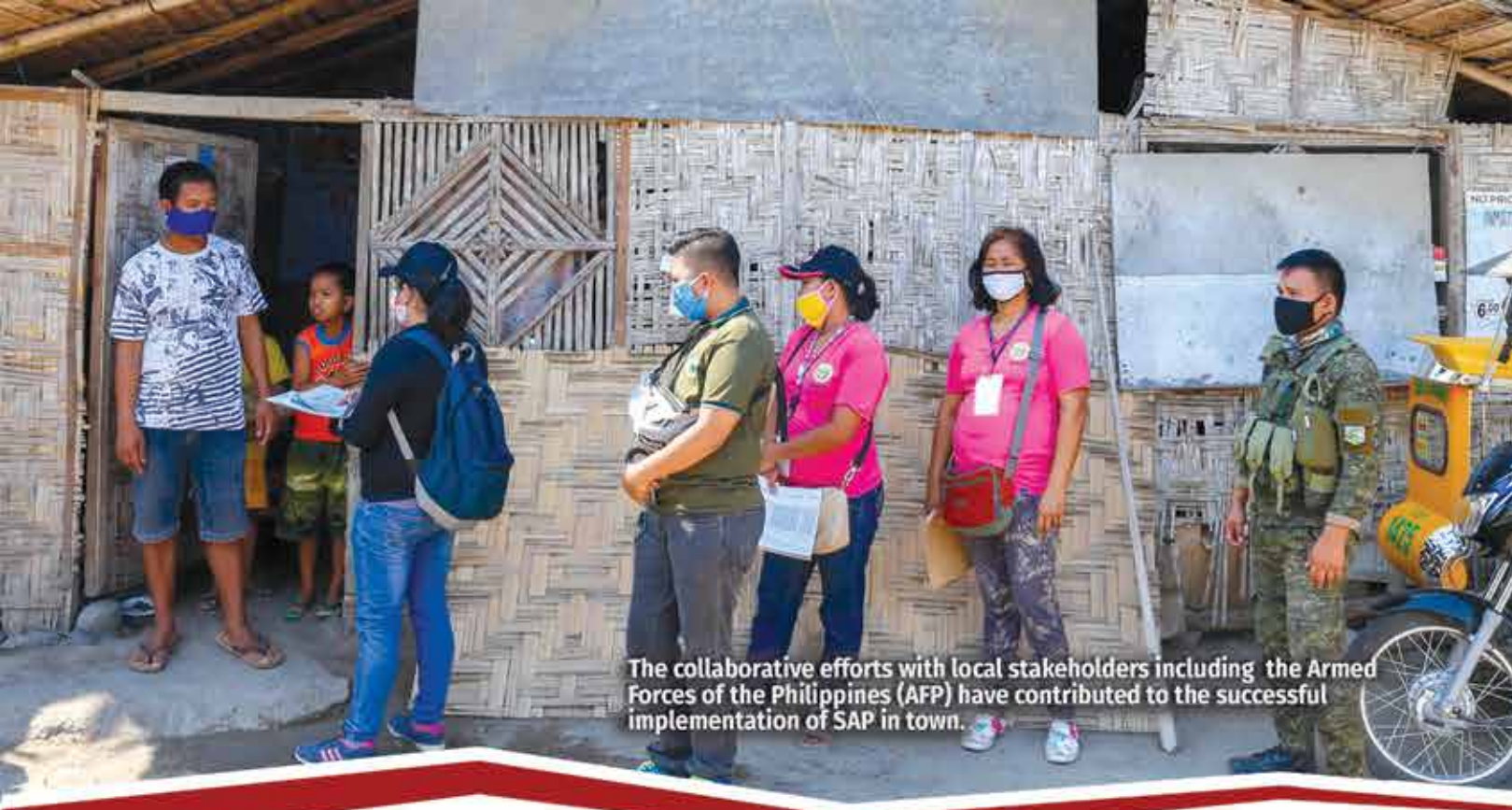
Delivery of Social Welfare and Development (SWD) Programs by Local Government Units through Local Social Welfare and Development Offices (LSWDOs) improved

52

**DSWD XII lauds LGU
Kiamba for FAST
and EFFICIENT
SAP implementation**



54 **Working together
for indigent
SENIOR CITIZENS**



The collaborative efforts with local stakeholders including the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) have contributed to the successful implementation of SAP in town.

DSWD XII lauds LGU Kiamba for FAST and EFFICIENT SAP implementation

KIAMBA, Sarangani Province - Nanay Visilda Dutarot, 42, lived a simple life where selling kangkong or water spinach that grows aplenty in their backyard is her main source of income. She is earning from P50-P80 per day, just enough to address the regular needs of her family of five.

Her husband, Jun Dutarot, 45, on the other hand, is a known fisherman in their barangay for seven years. He would earn P150 daily in navigating small fishing boats in the nearby coastal area.



If to combine the income of Mr. and Mrs. Dutarot, they would be earning an average of P6,500. Too little to raise a family with three (3) children.

"Pait gyud ang kinabuhi karong panahona, kon di ka maningkamot, patyon imong pamilya sa kagutom (Life is very cruel. If you will not work hard, your family will starve to death)," Visilda stated.

Every day they would pray for good weather conditions so they could increase the volume of their harvest.

When the health pandemic struck in March of 2020 their income support suddenly stopped too.

"Wala nami kabalo unsa among buhaton, wala jud mi makuhaan og income (We're lost on what to do next. This is our only way of generating income)," Visilda added.

Not until the LGU Kiamba announced the provision of the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) of P5,000 prioritizing the giving of financial aid to the low-income earners like them.

"Maayo nalang naa nay niabot nga tabang sa gobyerno, makalingkawas nami sa kagutom (It's good to receive assistance from the government in these trying times, we can now secure our empty stomachs)," she added.

SAP IMPLEMENTATION

Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII) reported that as of May 5, 2020, the LGU has finished distributing cash aid to the targeted 7,281 low-income families in a span of five days, including weekends from April 30 to May 05.

"Among the key strategies that our LGU implemented which led to an efficient SAP distribution in our localities include maintaining close coordination among local social welfare and development office (LSWDOs) staff, barangay officials, and purok leaders. We also used social media in announcing information to keep our constituents informed," Elena Tolentino said, the head of Kiamba's Social Welfare Office.

"Hindi kami nahirapan because during the identification, the Pantawid workers are also working with us in our office. That's why every time may mga names submitted, nacocross-check agad (The identification process went smoothly because the Pantawid workers were also there to help us verify the qualified beneficiaries)," she added.

SETTING ASIDE POLITICAL INTEREST

Marie Jess M. Ancheta, Municipal Vice Mayor of Kiamba, made sure that potential beneficiaries were given "coupons," which serve as an invitation to participate in the final validation before the actual pay-out. The coupon holder would then go through three levels of validation, verification, and cross-matching by the staff.

"The LGU and BLGU were not part in the identification of the eligible beneficiaries. I do not want the program to be politicized by anyone, so I let the MSWDO make the identification. We decided to use the list from the DSWD to conduct validation immediately," Vice Mayor Ancheta said.

Naira Aratuc, division chief of Protective Services in DSWD FO XII, lauds LGU Kiamba for using different initiatives and strategies to quickly deliver the emergency cash subsidies to their constituents.

"The LGU has successfully identified eligible recipients of the said program since they know their constituents better. They have updated records of families who belong to the informal sector or the poorest of the poor," Aratuc said.

DSWD FO XII provided LGU Kiamba a total of P36,405,000 to implement the program to support low-income families whose livelihoods have been affected by the enhanced community quarantine.

EFFICIENT SAP IMPLEMENTATION

Meanwhile, three (3) other local governments in the region completed their pay-out, including Malungon in Sarangani Province, Bagumbayan in Sultan Kudarat, and Tupi in South Cotabato.

LGUs have also set up grievance hotlines where their constituents can come forward with any questions or clarifications regarding SAP.

With close coordination and good communication strategies, DSWD FO XII and the LGUs achieved a common goal to provide life-sustaining social interventions to families during the pandemic.



Working together for indigent SENIOR CITIZENS

NORALA, South Cotabato - At the age of 63, Lolo Rasid Bani, together with his wife, wakes up early every morning and walks the stretch of town for several hours, not as an exercise for their well-being, but to collect garbage and sell it to nearby junkshop just to make ends meet.

All five of Lolo Rasid's children got married, leaving both senior citizens in their dilapidated house in the town proper to find means to support their daily basic needs. Usually, they bring home P120 for the whole day of roaming around to earn the said amount.

Like anyone his age, if given a chance he would prefer spending the rest of his life in the comfort of their home with his wife.

But he accepted that they are not privileged enough despite some days are too tiring for their age. He felt that he is obliged to work so as not to depend on children's support because he knows their income is not enough for them too.

Things became worse with enforcement of lockdowns across the country, brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. It has thrown Lolo Rasid's livelihood into turmoil, whose income relies on being in public spaces through garbage collection and selling.

"We lost our income because we cannot move around to collect garbage. It was difficult for us and we do not know what to do," Lolo Rasid sadly narrated.

PROGRAM FOR INDIGENT SENIOR CITIZENS

Thanks to the pension program of the government, Lolo Rasid has been eligible to avail of the Social Pension (SocPen) Program implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in partnership with the local government units.

Social Pension (SocPen) Program is a government assistance of monthly stipend amounting to P500 to augment the daily subsistence and other medical needs of the indigent senior citizens. This is in line with the fulfillment of the obligation of the government to the most vulnerable sector through social protection to reduce the incidence of hunger among elderlies and protect them from neglect, abuse, and deprivation.

Indigent senior citizens are those who are frail, sickly, or with a disability, who do not receive their monthly pension from state-run agencies and do not have a permanent source of income or financial support from family or relatives like Lolo Rasid.

According to a September 2019 Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) paper, the country has about 7.5 million

senior citizens—aged 60 and above—as of 2015. This number is expected to double to 14.2 million by 2050. With this figure, 17.5 percent of the elderly are labeled "income poor," representing roughly 1.2 million senior citizens who need support the most.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

The DSWD Field Office XII has been closely working with the local government units to ensure that no one will be left behind in terms of the implementation of the SocPen Program.

In 2020, Norala in South Cotabato set the roof high, targeting 98 percent accomplishment in the distribution of social pension. Per semester, the LGU Norala targeted to reach 4,519 senior citizens. Records show that 4,430 and 4,470 senior citizens received their social pension in the first and second semesters of the year, respectively.

The town of Norala has been recognized for its effective and efficient implementation of the SocPen Program in coordination with its local stakeholders from identification, monitoring, and implementation of its beneficiaries.

LGU Norala has been exploring to increase the benefits for the elderly through other complementary programs. It has harmonized





Furthermore, the LGU has allocated some P50,000 every year as counterpart fund to support of various senior citizens' activities.

NEGLECTED NO MORE

"Thank you so much for your help. I can now buy our medicine and food (Daghang Salamat sa inyong tabang. Makapalit na gayod ko'g tambal ug pagkaon namong mag-asawa)," Lolo Rasid said after receiving P3,000.

According to the reports submitted by the LGU to the regional office, LGU Norala has been consistently among the early birds in terms of reports and updates, hitting 99% of the target beneficiaries every payout to ensure that pensions are given on time to rightful beneficiaries like of Lolo Rasid.

social protection programs of DSWD and across government agencies that are important in ensuring greater coherence in building risk resilience among poor and vulnerable sectors, including the elderly indigents.

"Norala LGU has initiated various systems and practices in order to be responsive to the needs of the senior citizens," Labinia B. Sarao said, SocPen Program focal person.

The local officials and stakeholders are regularly conducting home visits to monitor the situation of the senior citizens and address their pressing needs, Sarao said.

"The money we received is more than just any amount, it is a way of showing respect and the utmost care," Lolo Rasid smiling while holding his first-ever pension.

“
Thank you so much for
your help. I can now
buy our medicine
and food.



264,358
Indigent Senior Citizens
served

P1,586,148,000
Amount disbursed



Support to OPERATIONS PREVIEW

58 JASON'S
HOMECOMING



PROOF OF ASS

WD

PLIES

15631 12 20

REGION

DSWD

61 Nearly 800K poor
households assessed
in REGION XII

63 Women unite against
hunger through
COMMUNITY GARDEN

65 Angels in Red Vest
leaving home and family
to serve amid the
COVID-19 PANDEMIC

JASON'S HOMECOMING



Jason holds a box of food assistance he receives from DSWD FO XII.

SARANGANI PROVINCE - More than a year ago, Jason (not his real name), 30, felt immense excitement and anxiousness to meet his daughter for the first time in the verdant mountains of Sarangani. He vividly remembered hearing the giggling of a child in a small nipa hut at the top of the hill echoing amid the chirp of crickets. Hugging the curly-haired child tight, he eagerly introduced himself and said, "Jenny, Ako si Papa (I'm your father)." But a startled child cried and struggled to escape from his father's arm as if her life was in danger.

"Kadto na ang isa sa pinakamasakit nga akong nabati. Dili ko kaila ug dili magduol sa akong anak (That was one of the most agonizing moments. My daughter does not even recognize me)," he said.

For nine years, Jason, a front leader of the new people's army (NPA), the armed component of the Communist Party of the Philippines, had not been able to see his daughter grow. The NPA has been waging a Maoist-style insurgency against the government for more than 50 years. They are aggressive in convincing many youths in impoverished areas of the southern Philippines to be part of a new generation of communist fighters. However, Jason seemed to have failed to convince his daughter to believe that he was her father.

Jason himself grew up in a low-income family from a mountain village in Cotabato province. He had wanted to become a soldier but went underground

as a left-wing activist. He was convinced that their revolution can be a great instrument in crushing poverty, despair, inequitable distribution of wealth, and other societal injustices. Jason was not a stranger to seeing these injustices. He was born and raised in a village where government services could barely be felt or seen.

IDEOLOGICAL ENTRAPMENT

Being trapped in a different ideology requires constant self-justification and can sometimes be destructive. It operates under the pretense of morality and shapes one's thoughts and actions in the community.

Jason's foray into the communist rebel movement started when he was asked to attend an indoctrination session. His decision to join the NPA had boosted the group's recruits, mostly in their 20s and 30s.

As a youth leader, the twenty-one-year-old Jason generated anti-government campaigns convincing communities that the government is inutile and failed to fulfill its mandate to its citizenry.

"Akong ginasigurado nga masuko ang mga tao sa gobyerno ug ang pag-asa mao ang pagsulod sa kalihukan sa kabukiran (My role was to ensure that people hated the government and that the only hope for change is to join the guerilla movement)," Jason said.

Instead of holding a pen and paper in school, Jason lugged M-16 rifles and grenade launchers. After three years, he became a front leader operating in the Sarangani areas, with 86 members in his troop. Soon, he became a front leader in one of the elite groups guarding the peripheries of Sarangani Province, Davao Del Sur, and Davao Occidental.

Believing that NPA has the "right" to impose the levy in its territory, he was involved in the intensive collection of taxes for the movement to fund services for its communities. Refusal to pay such taxes led to attacks and other violent extremist activities.

"Ang strategy sa NPA kay i-trap ang mga miyembro para makahimo ug krimen, so wala ka na choice kung di magtago sa kabukiran (It was a strategy to trap members by pushing them to commit crimes which leaves them with no choice but to hide in the mountains forever)," Jason explained.

There were moments when Jason thought of coming home to see his parents and siblings but was repeatedly reminded that family comes only after the organization.

"Sa kadugayan, nangando'y ko og normal nga kinabuhi ug walay kahadlok (After years of armed struggle, I longed for a normal life and be able to live without fear)," Jason said.

"Nagsaka ko og bukid kaysa gutom ug kapobrehon unya mas sobrang kagutom pa akong nabati sa kalihukan (Hunger and poverty made me decide to join the guerilla movement but it was even more unbearable hunger and struggle once I was there)," he further expound.

BACK TO THE FOLDS OF THE LAW

When President Rodrigo Duterte signed Executive Order 70, it was a turning point for Jason. EO 70 institutionalized the whole-of-government approach

in attaining peace by ending local communist armed conflict in the country.

"Dili nako gusto nga magpareho sa akong anak (I don't want my children to follow my footsteps)," he said.

Jason married his fellow NPA member and had two children. He wanted to be with his children but had to choose to leave them with his parents because their life as guerillas were not fit for children.

"Kaya ko ang ginapabuhay sa kalihukan pero dili nako kaya makita akong mga anak nga walay kaugmaon. Magdako akong mga anak nga dili ko kilala (I can't accept the idea that my children will have no future. I do not want them to grow up not even knowing me)," he said.

During the pandemic, the government continues its campaign to convince those who have gone astray to start a new and liberating life. Jason had proven the government's sincerity in attaining lasting peace in the countryside. He wanted to be an example of life after an armed struggle. When they decide to surrender, a peaceful and productive life awaits former guerilla soldiers like him.

The DSWD FO XII has implemented various social welfare and development programs to 23 local government units or a total of 103 barangays in the region amounting to P317 million.

NEW LIFE JOURNEY

After nine years of recruiting people to join the revolution against the government, Jason convinced his followers to join him to surrender their arms and live a new life in peace.





Together with his wife and 30 other NPA members, Jason availed the government's Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program or E-CLIP. He underwent a month-long de-radicalization program.

As a result, his troop availed the government package of services including housing, livelihood, health, and education from various national government agencies, as promised by President Duterte.

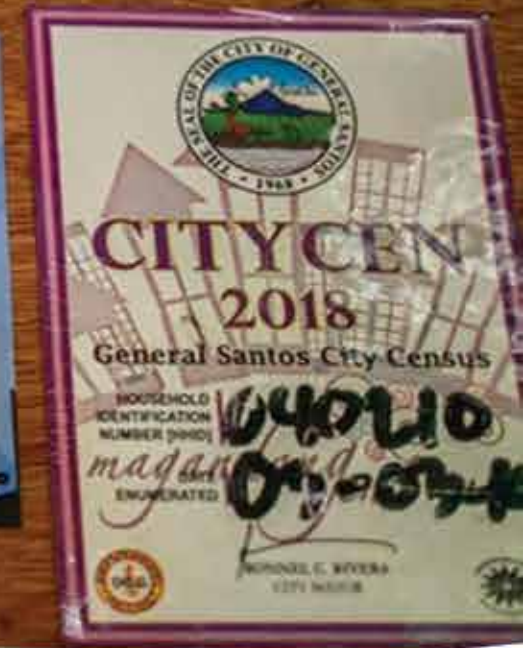
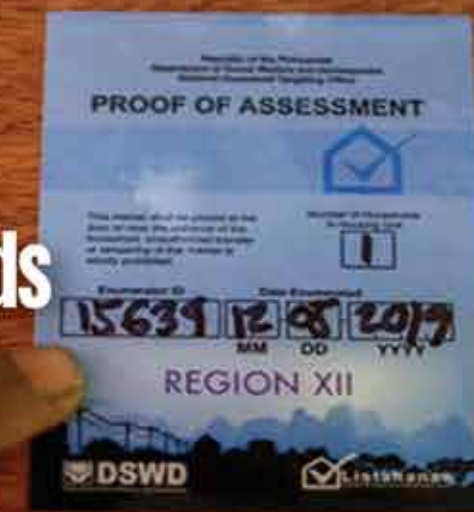
By sharing his life experience, Jason is now helping the Philippine Army prevent other youths from being lured by the false promises of the communist rebel movement.

He also successfully convinced 80 out of 86 NPA members he used to lead to surrender.

Today, Jason lives peacefully together with his wife and children, just like any other civilian citizen. It took more than a year before his daughter finally recognized him. He can now hear the sweetest word, "Papa," from his daughter, Jenny.

"I am very positive about the effort of the government in curbing the communist insurgency under the leadership of President Duterte because of his strong adherence to democracy," Jason concluded.

Nearly 800K poor households assessed in REGION XII



TANTANGAN, South Cotabato - Deep in the small village of Tantaran, a farming town of South Cotabato Province in Mindanao Island, Mona Lustre's heart rejoices as she witnessed the arrival of enumerators that will survey their community for possible inclusion in state-run pro-poor programs.

A mother to three children, aged 8, 5, and 3, Lustre, in her 40s, said she was hoping they will be included soon in government programs, considering her husband, who was working at a construction firm, lost his job due to COVID-19 pandemic.

While sitting outside their small-wooden home, Lustre was excited to meet the enumerator in-charged of assessing whether her family will qualify in the program implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD FO XII).

"It will be a big help if we will be listed...meaning we can avail of the government services," Ms. Lustre said.

A high-school graduate, Lustre, who grew up in the southern Philippine city of Marawi, the country's Islamic City that pro-IS fighters held for a five-month siege in 2017, rely only on the sales of their small sari-sari store.

In 2020, the DSWD assessed nearly 800,000 households across the region for possible inclusion in government social protection programs.

Cezario Joel Espejo, DSWD FO XII regional director, said the agency, through its National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) - an information management system that identifies poor households in the country -

has completed 96.8 percent of its assessment, covering 815, 343 households across the region targeted for the agency's social development programs.

Of the total figures, Dir. Espejo said 573,708 came from urban areas while 215,434 are located in remote communities.





Women unite against hunger through COMMUNITY GARDEN

MATALAM, North Cotabato – For a mother blessed with only one child, Jenny Gandaluza Ontok, in her 40s, life was never easy growing up in the poor village of Barangay Nututungan, in the small farming town of a mountainous area.

Recalling her childhood experiences, Jenny promised herself in the future that her family and children will not experience sleeping with an empty stomach with only root crops like sweet potato, cassava, and banana for meals in a day.

“The clash between Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the 1970s to 1980s compelled my family to seek shelter in evacuation centers,” she said.

“All these inspired me to work for peace and help improve the lives of my neighbors in the village even through vegetable gardening,” she added.

The women in the village depend on the wages of their husbands who are working in construction sites or sugar cane industry on a daily basis or they called “*inadlawan*.”

SMALL COMMUNITY GARDEN

In 2015, Jenny together with other community women started a small-scale gardening project intended solely for a daily consumption. The community garden is cultivated in a small lot in Barangay Natutungan, Alamada, North Cotabato.

In 2017, personnel from the Barangay and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office of Alamada (MSWDO-Alamada) which proceeded to the area for cash-for-work (CFW) program noticed the community garden project.

After the meeting with the Barangay, Jenny and MSWDO-Alamada, started to include the women of Sitio Ontok, Purok 6 for a project to build a community garden.

The 1.5 hectares garden was donated by the husband of Jenny and supported the program for the welfare of the villagers.

The CFW program is under the Risk Resiliency Program - Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (RRP-CCAM) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII), a program designed to encourage people to strengthen their efforts against possible disaster.

Anchored in 2008 Administrative Order No. 15, the agency has started providing CFW to residents selected by the local government units to work on a series of projects in hazard and risk villages vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

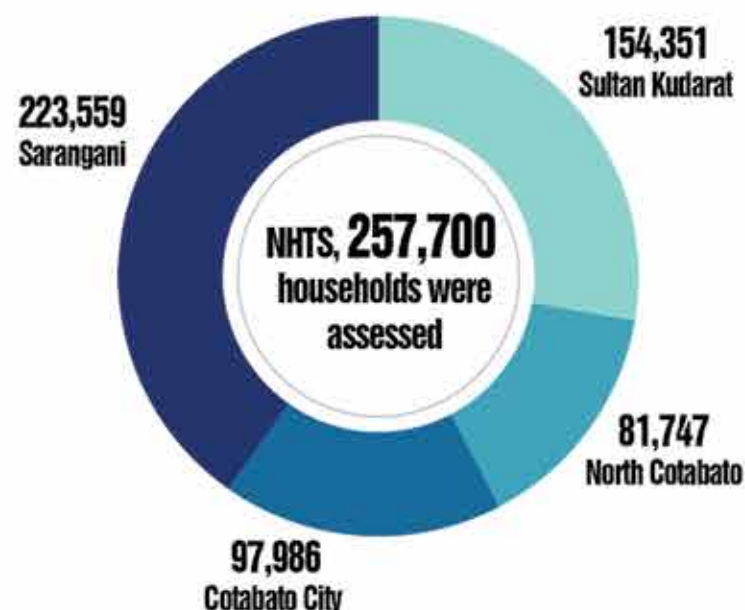


“This will be our basis in our effort to locate and identify who and where the poor sectors are,” Dir. Espejo said as he explained it does not guarantee households assessed will be provided assistance immediately.

In the latest report released by the NHTS, 257,700 households were assessed in North Cotabato; 81,747 in Cotabato City; 97,986, Sarangani; 223,559, South Cotabato; and 154,351 in Sultan Kudarat.

Sohra Guialel, NHTS section head, said data collected from households assessed were already encoded in the agency’s database system for Proxy Means Test (PMT), a statistical model used to determine whether a certain family is eligible or not for inclusion in government social protection programs and services.

Guialel said the data generated from PMT will also be used by other national government agencies, local government units, non-government organizations, and other institutions as a reference for services focusing on alleviating poverty nationwide.



“The community garden started in the village with 30 women, mostly mothers, and their number is growing,” Ontok cited, who is the chairman of Muslim Women’s Rural Worker Association, Inc.

The group now boasts 200 members as they registered their association in Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) last 2018.

“A few years ago, housewives in the area were having the same routine by cleaning their houses, and now, they are helping to clean the 1.5 hectares community garden,” Ontok said.

Moreover, husbands are now helping their wives in tending the garden that provides local employment in the area.

As years passed by, they harvested some of their plants like banana, turmeric, ginger, eggplant, root crops, and lemongrass and sold the products in the local markets where almost 15 kilometers to track before reaching the downtown area.

Aside from the food provided by the community garden, villagers were able to survive in terms of financial difficulties since every end of the month, the association equally allocates funds to every member.

FOOD SUPPLY

Now, the members are relying on the food and income from the community garden, they also started their gardening in their backyards.

“The key to sustaining the project developed by the community with the help of the agency is the vision and goal of the village and members.” Cezario Joel Espejo said the regional director of DSWD FO XII.

Dir. Espejo, also stated that sustainability is one of the important elements in every project.

The area in Purok 6 and nearby villages are under the Peace Development Community area of Moro National Liberation Front which means it is a safer and rebel-free community.

“After the war in this area, we are in peace right now,” Barangay Kagawad Adam Balah explained.

Aside from the community garden in Purok 6, there are also gardens in Puroks 2 and 3 donated by their leaders to support the sustainability of the project.



The association intends to widen the community garden and more local products to plant.

They also aim to connect to Non-Government Agencies to help their members undergo training on producing local turmeric powder and making banana chips.

As Jenny’s life improved, the entire village also prospered. Just like the life of a seed before it sprouts and blooms, it will bury deep under the ground.

Angels in Red Vest leaving home and family to serve amid the COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In the Philippines, the COVID-19 pandemic grows by the day. As such, frontliners – medical workers, policemen, and volunteers – are in the thick of the battle, still hopeful, whatever the cost.

The same goes for the DSWD FO XII employees, whom we consider “Heroes” amid pandemic, particularly those who continue to provide basic services to provide the essential needs of those affected by the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).



Chistie Rio Buhayan

Chistie has been working in DSWD FO XII - Crisis Intervention Unit (CIU) for 3 years. As a social worker assigned in Surallah, South Cotabato, her task is to address the immediate needs of the clients in the form of medical, financial, psychological assistance through Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS).

Chistie chose to be away from her family so that she can continue to serve with her fellow social workers inside the satellite office of CIU. Christie shares, “While most stay at home, we are staying away from home to provide support to clients in a state of the health crisis.”

The biggest challenge for her during the pandemic aside from the fear of getting the virus is the difficulty in terms of public transportation. She recalls the moment that she needs to walk half a kilometer just to look for a public utility vehicle (PUV) for her to safely arrive in their office.

Hilbert Estacion

Hilbert’s critical role as a regional social marketing officer is to coordinate and disseminate the communications through social media platforms, regarding the implementation of the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) of DSWD.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has generated overwhelming amounts of information especially with the execution of SAP. We, in Social Marketing Unit, are fighting an infodemic as well as an epidemic,” explained Hilbert. “Too much information makes us difficult to identify what is relevant and what is not. In turn, people struggle to know what to believe and what actions they should take,” he further explained.

Hilbert made the initiative to formulate a Crisis Communication Plan in which his fellow Information Officers executed. They started making Frequently Asked Questions and produced photo and video testimonies of beneficiaries by the government’s emergency cash assistance.



Cres Osco

The unexpected pandemic had a drastic impact on the way people work. In-person meetings and presentations have been replaced by video teleconferencing.

Cres managed to report during and beyond office hours including weekdays just to ensure that the teleconference runs smoothly and hassle-free.

Cres' responsibility in providing maintenance or troubleshooting for the internet and other important virtual meetings of the agency's management committees. The flow of pertinent information related to COVID-19 from all corners of the command remains essential in both disseminating and receiving solid data.



Benilda Cortez

Benilda's duty as a provincial link in Sultan Kudarat is to supervise the field workers from ten (10) municipalities and one (1) city in administering the services of the DSWD down to the grassroots level.

Leading the groundwork activities, Benilda's initiatives are vital to lessen the inclusion and exclusion error of SAP implementation.

"There were some beneficiaries who are not truthful in filling out their SAC forms. We have to double-check their data so we can ensure that the financial aid from the government will be given to the right families," Benilda said.

She would even receive threats from unknown individuals in her job as a validator. But this does not stop her from doing her job.

While looking through her team in the service of others, she described it as the "Bayanihan Spirit" being much alive, and efficiently responding and addressing the concerns of their beneficiaries with the thrust of "malasakit" in their resolve.



Nor-alea Saripada

To address the issues and concerns of families who believe that they are eligible but have been excluded from the list of beneficiaries of SAP, DSWD FO XII has assigned a grievance team that will consolidate the appeals from different families and individuals.

Nor-alea Saripada, the management audit analyst, spearheaded the team with a total of 5,616 inquiries received and resolved after proper referencing and reporting to the concerned individuals and offices for validation and investigation. Their task is to deliver feedback and action taken within 24 hours from the receipt of the complaint at the height of SAP implementation.

"We take responsibility for every complaint from the ground level and guarantee that government funds are given to the rightful beneficiaries," Nor-alea said.

HONORING FRONTLINERS

The Department honors the frontliners not just with rhetoric but with substance by releasing their daily hazard pay of P500.

Ludmilla D. Rellores, chief of Financial Management Division of DSWD FO XII prioritizes the processing of hazard pay as the law enacted under Administrative Order No. 26, authorizing the grant of hazard pay to government personnel who physically work during the period of implementation of enhanced community quarantine relative to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We owe it to all frontline workers who are risking their lives for the rest of us to adequately compensate, support, recognize, and protect them. Hazard pay is the least we can do to compensate them for the risks they face," Rellores said.

COVID-19 might be unkind to many, but it does not deter our real-life heroes from doing their job and serving the public.



DSWD XII receives PRIME-HRM Maturity Level 2 certification from CSC

KORONADAL CITY - Julius Q. Antipala, 33, has been working as financial analyst in Department of Social Welfare and Development Field Office XII (DSWD FO XII) under a special program, Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan - A Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS). In mid of 2020, there were job opportunities that opened within and outside the agency.

"I assessed the pros and cons of applying within or transfer to another agency," Julius said who also graduated cum laude in college and consistently outstanding performing staff.

Eventually, Julius applied for the Supervising Administrative Officer of Kalahi-CIDSS Program, as he trusted the recruitment, selection, and learning opportunities of the agency as compared to other agencies.

"I believe, with the DSWD's strengthened recruitment process, selection of applicants, placement of staff, learning and development, the decisions will be based on merit and fitness of aspiring applicants," Julius added.

Like any principled personnel, Julius believes that fairness and meritocracy should govern an organization's selection and promotion process. This belief was validated when Civil Service Commission (CSC) recognized and awarded DSWD FO XII the Bronze Maturity Level II Plaque for upholding excellence in its human resource management program.



Awards and Recognitions

The recognition, received by DSWD FO XII Regional Director Cezario Joel Espejo from CSC Director Ressurreccion Pueyo inside the office covered court, was a testament that the agency met the standards on the implementation of the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (Prime-HRM).

As a Prime-HRM Bronze awardee, the CSC granted the DSWD with the following privileges: authority to approve appointments, subject to post-audit; 20 percent discount for the HRM officer or agency representative on training and conferences conducted by the Civil Service Institute; endorsement or recommendation for scholarship grant offered by other institutions; and nomination to CSC's Certification Program for HRMOs subject to the guidelines to be issued by the Commission.

"This will serve as our daily motivation to bring out only the best in our HRM practices," Dir. Espejo said as he thanked the employees for doing their part.

"We will continue to improve our HRM systems to meet the indicators of the next higher level," he added, noting the agency will work harder to promoting HR processes.

Resurreccion P. Pueyo, Civil Service Commission (CSC) XII regional director, explained that attaining such award confirmed the DSWD FO XII has

managed and implemented its HRM systems according to documented process, particularly in recruitment, selection and placement, performance management, learning and development, rewards and recognition.

"This recognition is brought about by your acceptance to change. It could not be denied that success and excellence could only be met if everyone participates and work together," he said.

Pueyo also said they will tap the agency as a model among other national government agencies across the region in propagating their campaign in Excellence in Human Resource Management.

The CSC has been mandated to implement Prime-HRM through CSC Memorandum Circular No. 3, Series of 2012 and CSC Resolution No. 1200241, a mechanism that empowers government agencies by developing their human resource management competencies, systems, and practices related to human resource excellence.

DSWD FO XII will continue its PRIME-HRM journey as it hopes to achieve recognition on the three remaining HR systems: Recruitment, Selection, and Placement (RSP); (2) Learning and Development (L&D); (3) Performance Management (PM); and (4) Rewards and Recognition (R&R), Espejo added.

As for Julius, after passing the pre-qualifying and technical examination, panel interview, and other required hiring procedures, he was hired for the position he applied for.

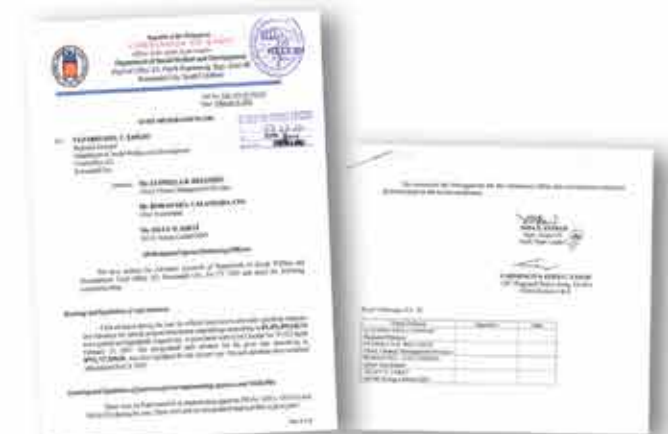
Currently, he is undergoing various trainings and capability building activities for his personal and professional growth to be an efficient and effective government employee.



Recognized by DILG as 3rd Best Performing Region during the implementation of the Social Amelioration Program last May, 2020.



Recognized by StarPay Corporation during the implementation of digital payment of cash grants under Social Amelioration Program of the government.



Recognized by Commission on Audit for the Field Offices efforts in efficiently facilitating the liquidation of all outstanding cash advances

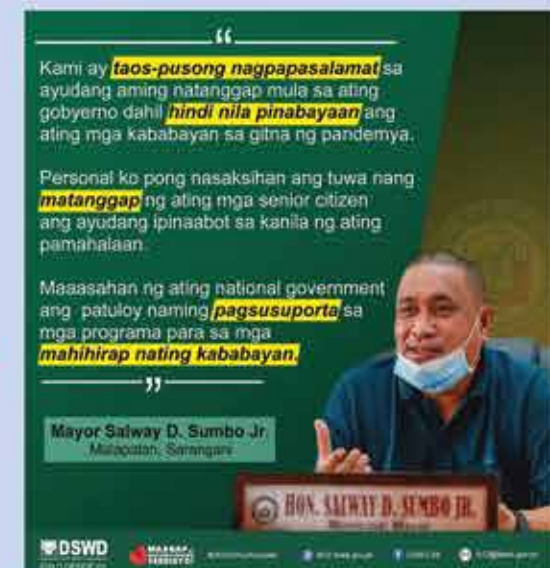
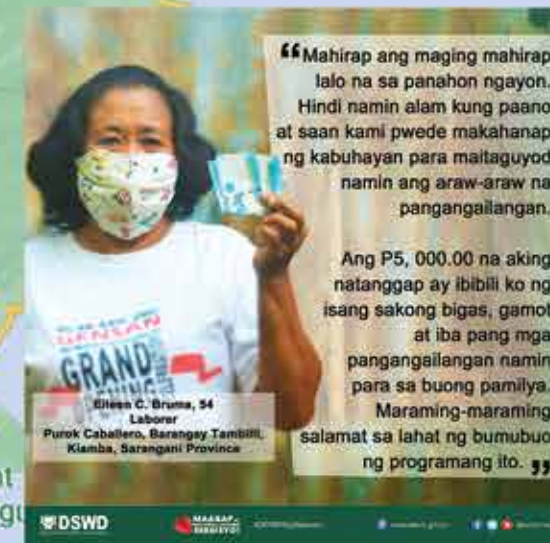
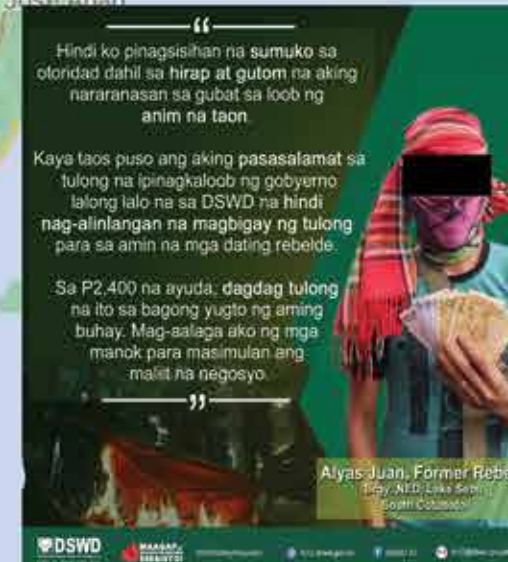
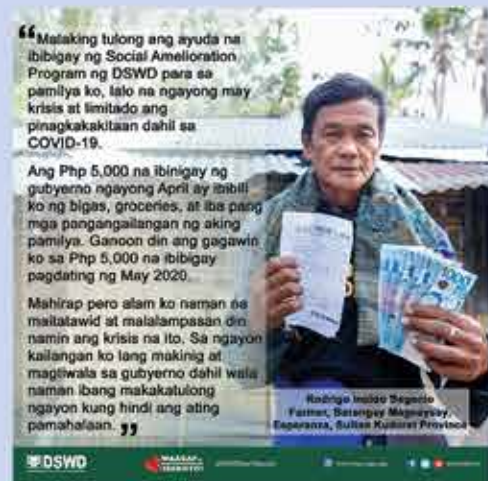


Recognized by LGU for prompt action on Augmentation Request



Improved tri-media mileage and partnership and page followers with estimated 150,000 audience

EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE Beneficiaries and Partners



THE OFFICIAL INSIGNIA OF DSWD FO XII



SYMBOLS AND MEANINGS



THE YELLOW GRIDLINE - Represents unity and cooperation of DSWD employees and the people they serve. As an agency of a humanitarian institution, oneness with the people is vital to achieve organizational goals. The yellow color surrounding the tri-people serves as a binding thread uniting the people that DSWD FO XII serves.



THE MUSLIM'S INAUL - This fabric mostly hand-made by Muslim women symbolizes the respect to culture and beliefs of the Muslim communities, the first occupants of Mindanao. They are also one major group that needs sensitivity and care from the government.



THE BLAAN'S ALBONG - The cloth which is known to B'laan communities represents the tribal communities and other indigenous tribes dwelling in SOCCSKSARGEN. They are the ones that needs priority from the government in terms of economic improvement and needs social welfare and development programs.



THE T'BOLI'S RENOWNED T'NALAK FABRIC - A symbolism of the blending of the culture, strength, and unity of the various ethnic groups living in the region.



THE RED HEART - Represents the burning aspirations of the agency in its pursuit to provide care and promote the welfare of people and communities.



THE 1st PERSON - Represents the Muslim community that forms 30% of the region's population.

THE 2nd PERSON - Represents the lowlanders Christian community mostly inhabiting the urban areas of SOCCSKSARGEN.

THE 3rd PERSON - Represents the various tribal communities in SOCCSKSARGEN region consisting of Blaans, T'bolis, Manobos and others.



THE BLUE HAND - A symbolism of the agency's helping instrument to show care, concern consequently uplifting the lives of the tri-people in SOCCSKSARGEN with diverse cultures and traditions. The Blue represents peace among all tribes and the people despite diversity of culture and beliefs.



The White Background - Formed like Mountain, symbolizes Mt. Matutum and the Christian communities of Region 12. More than half of Region's population is dominated by Christian descendants from Luzon-Visayas migrants.



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