

PhilDHARRA
Highlights of Operations / Performance
(2019-2020)

I. Developing and strengthening rural communities / rural peoples' organizations (RPOs)

In 2019 to 2020 PhilDHARRA's network members and secretariat have continued to implement various interventions that are geared towards achieving the goals set in the PhilDHARRA Strategic Action Plan (PSAP) for 2017 to 2021. These interventions that are within PhilDHARRA's development framework on "Asset Reform and Rural Development" (ARRD), contribute significantly to poverty reduction and increasing resiliency of communities in the rural areas.

Sustainable Agriculture, Productivity Improvement and Marketing

Around 26 PhilDHARRA network members facilitated provision of farm production support, technology and marketing for the target communities and peoples' organizations. These interventions enabled the farmers to develop their farmlands into more productive uses; thus, contributing to increased farm household income.

Xavier Agricultural Extension Services Foundation, Inc. (XAESFI) extended livelihood assistance to almost 1,800 farming households through their project titled "Poverty Reduction through Organization of Community Agri-Enterprise and Health Support Services" (PROCESS) in Zamboanga Sibuguey. Beneficiaries were able to access socialized credit assistance in the form of farm inputs such as high-value seedlings, large animals, poultry and livestock. On top of these, farm technology training were also extended to farmers. The livelihood support intends to increase the income of poor households by at least 30%.

Josefa Segovia Foundation, Inc. (JSF) trained 1,200 farmer-beneficiaries on organic agriculture and natural resource management. Interventions include formulation of farm plans, provision of farm inputs and some small infra support.

Lingap sa Kalusugan ng Sambayanan (LIKAS), contributed to the enhancement of agricultural production of 300 (189 men and 111 women) small-scale farmers in ten (10) barangays of Castilla and Pilar in the province of Sorsogon. Beneficiaries were provided with various on-site learning exposures, training and workshops to enhance their capacities on sustainable farming, climate change adaptation, and agro-enterprise development.

Bohol Integrated Development Foundation (BIDEF) has maintained its 5-hectare demonstration farm at Brgy. Malitbog in Dagohoy, Bohol and intensified their advocacy on organic farming. Apart from showcasing organic vegetables and fruit bearing plants, BIDEF also ventures into citrus-calamansi production and vermi compost fertilizers. Currently, the demonstration farm hosted 9 vermi houses with 18 vermi bins, 3 substrate stock house and 1 drying shed. A total of 1,238 bags of vermin cast was harvested for the year with a monthly average production of 103 bags.

PhilDHARRA Mindanao developed and implemented the Building Resilient Enterprises towards Sustainable Community (BRESCo). A Social Enterprise (SE) program of the network supported by the ReCOERDO program. Among the key results of the program was the formulation BRESCo business plan initially focusing on Coffee. The initial phase of BRESCo program primarily aims to support and develop the skills of small coffee growers in terms of producing, processing and

marketing of high quality Green Coffee Beans (GCBs). Also, five (5) network members of PhilDHRRA benefited from the training on business planning.

Natural Resource Management/Fisheries and Coastal Development

Around 15 Network members have been engaged in forest, coastal/mangrove rehabilitation and river basin management, adopting the "ridge to reef" approach, in partnership with local government units and national government agencies (DENR-PAMB) with funding support from national and international funding partners.

KAPWA Upliftment Foundation helped secure the Certificate of Ancestral Domain collectively owned by the Bagobo and Tagbanwa Tribes of Buenavida, Batasan, Buhat and Biangan in Makilala, Davao del Sur. The Foundation has also assisted around 3,000 indigenous peoples (IPs) engage in agro forestry.

Southern Pacific Integrated Area Development Foundation SPIADFI has planted assorted indigenous trees in the 287 hectares of Mt. Naculod Landscape. The project has involved a total of 1,500 farmers. They were also able to establish 2 learning sites in barangays Calag-itan and Bangcas-a. Environmental advocacy efforts are ongoing to protect the Mt. Naculod Landscape through barangay assemblies and IEC promotion in the LGUs of Silago, Anahawan and Sogod, Southern Leyte. SPIADFI has also assisted their people's organizations to engage in processing and marketing of coconut vinegar and turmeric tea.

In Zamboanga Sibuguey Bay, XAESFI, through their project titled "Sibuguey Bay Sustainable and Resilient Fisherfolk Development (SURF) project, facilitated the planting of 502,500 mangrove species in 25 sites in 8 municipalities with a total of 201 hectares. They also established 25 nurseries with 155,750 mangrove species. The SURF project is expected to improve the biodiversity of Sibuguey Bay in the next decades as a result of improved habitat environment for marine species. The project is implemented in partnership with the Provincial Local Government Unit (PLGU) of Zamboanga Sibuguey, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-CENRO), and their assisted peoples' organization, KGMC.

Guiuan Development Foundation (GDFI) was instrumental in re-establishing the sea-cucumber population in Maliwaliw Island, Eastern Samar. This was realized through a research project aimed at developing sea ranch grow-out culture technology for sandfish *Holothuria Scabra*, locally known as Kigo. Sandfish are high valued sea cucumber species in the export market but has suffered local extinction in many parts of the world including the Philippines. The project has benefitted a total of 96 fisherfolks (48 females and 48 males).

The Institute of Social Order (ISO) also implemented its coastal resource management programs in Palawan, Camarines Sur, Quezon and La Union. Their assisted communities participated in mangrove planting and the management of marine protected areas (MPAs). Some fisherfolks also engaged in aquasilviculture. Total fisherfolks assisted by ISO reached around 1,631.

II. Engaging public programs/sector and private program/sector

PhilDHRRA has actively participated in the Zero Extreme Poverty (ZEP) 2030 Movement. The Network has been designated as the Lead Convener for Agriculture and Fisheries Cluster. ZEP 2030 Coalition intends to uplift one million families from extreme poverty to self-sufficiency by 2030. As the Agri/Fisheries Cluster Lead Convener, PhilDHRRA with PAKISAMA and NFR (NGOs for Fisheries Reform) facilitated the crafting of the Agri/Fisheries development agenda. Mobilization of local partners for the implementation of ZEP 2030 projects is on-going.

In 2019, the Zero Extreme Poverty Philippines 2030 (ZEP 2030) movement strengthened its messaging by refocusing its approaches to empower local convergences and interventions. The year also gave equal importance in establishing the ZEP 2030 baseline data. PhilDHRRA as the Lead Convenor of the Agriculture and Fisheries Cluster was able to actively participate and organize activities for the coalition.

The Coalition has now pivoted towards mobilizing area-based convergences in key areas of the country, stimulating a collaborative platform among organizations in the area. PhilDHRRA was able to organize two (2) local convergence meeting in Cebu and Bohol. Central Visayas Network of NGOs volunteered to be the local convenor for the province of Cebu while PhilDHRRA member Bohol Integrated Development Foundation (BIDEF) volunteered for the Province of Bohol. Aside from the convergence meeting, PhilDHRRA was also able to conduct a Family and Community Visioning workshop in three (3) municipalities of Cebu Province.

To expand the advocacy of the ZEP 2030 movement, the Cluster is actively participating in different platforms of engagement such as the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF), Grow Asia conferences, Open Government Partnerships (OGP) and the Knowledge and Learning Market and Policy Engagement (KLMPE). In the 2019 KLMPE, the Cluster showcased the products of the FARMFIRST beneficiaries in the mini trade fair. FARMFIRST beneficiaries were also able to share their experience to the 350 farmers' and fishers' attendees of the conference.

In the second semester of 2020, PhilDHRRA took on the advocacy for empowering the young farmers and engaging them in Responsible Investments in Agriculture (RAI). The young farmers group of PAKISAMA was mobilized and provided with capacity building interventions. They young farmer leaders were encouraged to actively participate in pushing for the enactment of the Magna Carta for young farmers.

III. Strengthening your organizational capacities and services to your partners

In the past two years, PhilDHRRA implemented its internal capacity building program through the ReCoERDO and the Capacity Building Program supported by AsiaDHRRA and CODE NGO respectively.

PhilDHRRA was able to review and update/revise its policies, systems and procedures and reformulated its Operations Manual. Likewise, the Network also updated its Network Performance Monitoring System (NPMS).

The most pressing need of PhilDHRRA and its members is the lack of financial resources for program implementation and operating expenses. It was observed that the number of PhilDHRRA members have declined over the years primarily because many of the members have already closed shop due to their inability to secure funds for their continuous operations. Thus, the focus of the Network's capacity building interventions was directed in helping PhilDHRRA and its members generate financial resources that can support their program and operating costs.

PhilDHRRA developed its financial sustainability plan in 2018 and implemented it since 2019. The strategies included in the financial sustainability plan are: (1) the improved operation of the Partnership Center, (2) Training and Consultancy and (3) engagement in a social enterprise. Somehow, PhilDHRRA was able to realize some income from the Partnership Center and the Training and Consultancy engagements but these are still minimal and there's a need to further improve the services being offered and beef up the marketing aspect.

PhilDHRRA Mindanao started to implement the Building Resilient Enterprises towards Sustainable Community (BRESCo) with coffee as the product initially identified. The project is being developed as one of PhilDHRRA's potential sources of revenues.

To help the Network members develop and manage their projects well and be able to mobilize resources needed, PhilDHRRA conducted training/workshops on *Business Planning* and *Project Development and Proposal Preparation*. These workshops were attended by the staff of the 46 members of PhilDHRRA.

In 2019, the mentoring program for four Network members were also continued. The following members were mentored by volunteers from the PhilDHRRA Secretariat and members.

1. Guiuan Development Foundation, Inc. (GDFI) – strategic planning session, formulation of operations manual and resource mobilization plan
2. Josefa Segovia Foundation
3. Institute of Primary Health Care – Davao Medical School Foundation (IPHC-SDMF)
4. Mandiga Ob-obbo Community Center (MCCI)

The participants of the Mentoring program were able to avail of assistance in the formulation of their strategic plans, operations manual and resource mobilization plan.

In the past four (4) years, all of the active PhilDHRRA members availed of various capacity building training conducted by PhilDHRRA through the ReCoERDO project, Expanded Capacity Building Project funded by Peace & Equity Foundation through CODE NGO, and CCCE PAG PR project. Participants to these various training activities have enhanced their knowledge and skills on: (1) transparent, accountable and participatory governance/constructive engagement; (2) disaster-risk reduction and management; (3) participatory planning and budgeting; (4) monitoring government projects using social accountability tools (SAc); (5) CSO development and reform agenda formulation (6) advocacy, lobbying and communication; (7) project proposal writing; (8) project development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; (9) resource mobilization and (10). constructive engagement with the government.

PhilDHRRA-Mindanao sustained the clustering approach to maximize resource and technology sharing. In 2017 to 2019, ten (10) regional cluster meetings were held. In these meetings, network members were able to provide inputs in the PhilDHRRA strategic plan, share good practices in the implementation of their programs and projects, social and political issues in the region and country, membership concerns, among others.

IV. Other key significant achievements

CCCE PAG-PR or Consolidating CSO Networks for Citizen Engagement towards Participatory and Accountable Governance for Poverty Reduction is a project funded by the European Union implemented by PhilDHRRA from 2015-2019 in partnership with ANSA-EAP in 27 municipalities/cities across the country. Its main objective is to consolidate and capacitate local CSOs to participate in public processes specifically in the planning and monitoring of government project and programs aimed at reducing poverty. It focused on four aspects of citizen engagement – 1) consolidation and constituency building; 2) capacity building; 3) citizen monitoring; and 4) institutionalization of good practices for good governance.

CCCE PAG-PR project provided a venue for the CSOs to coalesce at the municipal/city level and identify their agenda and prioritize accordingly based on needs and key development issues of their respective areas. Throughout the project duration, a number of CSO coalitions and networks were organized. There are twelve (12) new municipal coalitions of CSOs with one (1) that has successfully lobbied for their institutionalization through an ordinance. Eleven (11) of which are still a loose coalition but are recognized by their respective LGUs through a Memorandum of Understanding. These 11 coalitions/networks are still in the process of registration and institutionalization thru municipal or city ordinance. There are also eight (8) existing municipal CSO networks that were strengthened through the different capacity building activities. Because of their active participation,

the Tagbilaran City CSOs successfully lobbied for the reactivation of the Tagbilaran City Peoples Council. On the other hand, seven (7) municipal project areas are still struggling to consolidate themselves into a network or coalition. Six (6) of them have formed core groups while one (1) have not organized into a group or network of CSOs due to political issues.

Consolidation of the efforts of local CSOs along participatory governance has laid down the conditions for widening their influence through networking at the city or municipal level. At the outset, consultation workshops were held so that city or municipal CSOs agree on key priority development issue/agenda and formulate a strategy or advocacy action plan (AAP) geared towards influencing LGU plans and budget to be supportive of the key development issues identified.

Convergence of civil society had been challenging all throughout project life. Low appreciation on collaboration, CSO readiness and capacities, degree of LGU receptiveness to coalition building and patronage political affiliation contributed to formation and non-formation of local CSO networks. CSOs challenged by political constraints such as LGUs who views CSOs as fault finders, had to undergo a longer process to consolidate themselves and to prove their intention to assist the government for better service delivery. CSO readiness and CSO capacities also affected the convergence of local CSOs. The coalition building process requires commitment and resources from the different organizations. More often than not, CSO members lack the confidence in engaging different stakeholders especially their government officials. Also, almost all CSOs are challenged in terms of financial resources. But as the project progresses, CSOs slowly showed appreciation to the importance of consolidating themselves and use the platform as leverage to advocate priority development issues at different government offices or councils. On the other hand, in areas where LGUs are receptive, it is easier for CSOs to form a network or coalition. CSOs were provided with more opportunities for collaboration and engagement with LGU in delivering services to their respective communities.

As the project ended in June 2019 with significant gains, PhilDHRRA was able to secure a follow through project entitled CCCE PAG-PR Phase 2. The Phase 2 project aims to reinforce and build on the contribution of CCCE PAG-PR in strengthening civil society organizations' (CSOs) capacities in mobilizing effective citizens' demand for transparency, accountability and participatory local governance in pursuit of improved service delivery towards poverty reduction in 18 municipalities/cities. Currently, the project is being implemented amidst the COVID-19 pandemic challenge.