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Contents

1. Featured Project ~ *Pro-Child Care Project* ~
 2. Featured NGO ~ *Asian Community Trust (ACT)* ~
 3. NGO Desk Activity ~ *Project Site Visit* ~
 4. Directory
-

1. Featured Project ~ *Pro-Child Care Project* ~



One of the Harmony Play Centers constructed by the community

The Community Empowerment Program (CEP) featured this month is the “Promoting Community Capacity to Care for Conflict-Affected Children in Central Mindanao or the Pro-Child Care Project” which started last November 2004 and will finish on March 2006.

The Project aims to develop sustainable physical and social infrastructure that will contribute to the physical safety, psychosocial well-being and intellectual development of children and youth in the 75 sitios of the 25 conflict-affected barangays in the municipalities of Carmen, Kabacan and Pikit in North Cotabato Province and in Datu Montawal and Pagalungan in Maguindanao Province in ARMM. The children and youth from the barangays have personally witnessed violence during the armed conflicts in their area and now have a certain degree of trauma.

About 2,225 children ages three to five years old, 225 Caregivers, 75 Community Workers and 375 youth in 75 sitios will directly benefit from the Project. The 3 problems that will be addressed by the project are; 1) the certain degree of trauma faced by the children and youth in the community as a result of armed conflict, 2) the lack of day-care centers in the community to help stimulate the intellectual development and physical growth of very young children and, 3) the lack of training and opportunities for conflict-affected youth who are vulnerable to recruitment for combat.



Typical set-up of a Harmony Play Center



Mural painting activity by the youths

The Project will 1) Construct 75 “Harmony Play Centers” in 75 sitios, 2) Conduct Mural painting activity by the youth, 3) Provide blackboard, chairs, tables and other simple supplies for the Harmony Play Centers, 4) Gather baseline data, 5) Conduct training for caregivers and community workers, 6) Supervise the initial operation of the centers and 7) Monitoring and Evaluation activities.

The Community and Family Services International (CFSI), an international NGO based in the Philippines, was tapped to be the partner of JICA for this Project. CFSI was established in 1981 and has worked closely with international community as well as national and local authorities responsible for uprooted persons in the Philippines, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. For the past years, CFSI has carried out special training efforts for humanitarian workers, social service personnel and human rights specialists. CFSI aims (1) to empower and equip uprooted persons in exceptionally difficult circumstances to address and prevent social and health problems, and (2) to prevent children, women and men from being uprooted by promoting peace, respect for human rights and the equitable distribution of resources.



Children in Harmony Play Center together with the caregiver and community worker

2. Featured NGO ~ Asian Community Trust (ACT) ~

Asian Community Trust (ACT) is Japan’s first Charitable Trust which was established in 1979 with the purpose of administering bequests and funds donated by Japanese individuals and organizations to assist people at the grassroots level in developing countries in Asia. In their 25 years of service, ACT worked in partnership with People’s Organizations (POs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and other Civil Society Organizations in countries like Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Nepal by financially supporting about 380 projects in the field of agriculture and rural development, education and youth development, health care, environmental conservation and cultural preservation.

ACT’s assistance in the Philippines started through 3 projects, one of which is the training and support for small scale farmers in appropriate technology in 1981. ACT Desk Philippines, a local window was established in 1991 as a response to the growing demands for assistance and the need to be more flexible and efficient in extending aid in the

Philippines. ACT Desk is responsible in looking for good project proposals or models which can be funded by ACT. Selected projects are also monitored by ACT Desk and a Program Officer from Tokyo at least once a year. Application period starts every November and the screening of project proposal ends in January of the following year. The project duration is usually one year but can be extended depending on the results. The grant amount is around 8,000 to 12,000 US dollars per year. In the Philippines, the average number of projects funded by ACT is 4 projects per year.



IP Youths

For 2005, ACT is supporting 6 projects in the Philippines. One of the projects supported by ACT is the “Indigenous Peoples’ Scholarship Program” which is being implemented by Katutubong Samahan ng Pilipinas (KASAPI). The project basically aims to give opportunity for the IPs to be educated at the college level. At present, 35 IPs from all over the Philippines are being supported by ACT. After graduation, these students are expected to return to their communities and become leaders.

Bicol Organization for Youth Services Foundation (BOYS Foundation) implements the “Alternative Education Program for the Protection and Development of Naga City Street Children” which benefits 100 out-of-school youths in Naga City, Camarines Sur. The youths receive vocational skills training like automotive repair and food preservation. Another project supported by ACT is the “Harnessing Development Entrepreneurship Among the Rural Youth” by Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA). The youths in 7 barangays in Leyte province are encouraged to be entrepreneurs and they receive various trainings such as project management, bookkeeping, financial management and skills training.



Training in automotive repair

In 2005, ACT provided a total of around 34,900,000 yen of assistance funds through fund-raising activities in Japanese communities. At present, ACT is focusing their assistance to Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia and Nepal due to its limited capacity in funding. However, ACT hopes to extend their assistance in more countries in the future by strengthening their public relations activities with potentials donors of trust funds.

3. NGO Desk Activity ~ Project Site Visit ~

NGO Desk activities include site visit at least once a year to on-going projects where the NGO Desk meets with the Local Government Unit, Implementing Organization, Counterpart Organization and Beneficiaries mainly to discuss the progress of the project, problems encountered and future plans among other things.



Residents of Barangay Solsogon,
Santa Margarita, Samar

NGO Desk visited last September 2005 the project on “Introduction of Sound Sanitary Systems for Sanitation and Income Generation in Samar” under the Technical Cooperation for Grassroots Projects. It is being implemented by a Japanese NGO called, Kyoto-Samar Friendship Association (KSFA) in cooperation with Filipino NGOs namely; Solsogon Action for Visible End (SAVE) and Community of God’s Servants Foundation (CGSF). The Project started last September 2004 and will end on March 2006. The project sites are Barangay Solsogon in Santa Margarita and Barangay Carayman in Calbayog City, Samar.

The main activities include construction of public toilets connected to biogas plants, formation of women’s group to act as the caretaker of the toilets, hog raising for income generation and training courses on sanitation.

In Barangay Solsogon, Santa Margarita, the public toilets, biogas plant and piggery are already fully operational. The toilets are well-maintained, the biogas is regularly used by the residents in cooking and the piggery is kept clean. In fact, nobody complains about foul odor which is the usual predicament of people living near piggeries.



Public toilets in Barangay Solsogon

The project has been visited by several high schools, colleges, NGOs and LGUs since it started its operations in June 2005. It instantly became the model for other LGUs and visitors usually ask for the design and cost of the biogas plant.

Kababaihan para sa Kalinisan at Kabuhayan (KKK) is the women’s group which was organized to be the caretaker of the toilets and piggery. They also teach the children and residents on the importance of health and sanitation. KKK has 33 members who take turns in maintaining the toilets.

The residents claim that most of them especially the children are becoming more and more accustomed in using the toilets properly. They also mentioned that the relationships

among neighbors have improved because of the project and the formation of KKK. According to KKK, changing the attitude of the residents towards health and sanitation is more difficult



On-going construction of biogas plant in Barangay Carayman, Calbayog City

than managing the project itself. However, they said being a member of KKK is not a burden at all.

In Barangay Carayman, Calbayog City, the toilet, biogas plant and piggery are still under construction. The construction was a bit delayed due to poor weather condition. The structure and design of the facilities are the same with the ones constructed in Barangay Solsogon.

Out of the target 63 households in the project area, only 3 have their own toilet, that is why the residents are very thankful for the project and are excited now that the construction of facilities is on-going. They hope that everyone will be supportive of the project especially the mothers and barangay leaders after the facilities become operational.

4. Directory

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~ *Editor's Note* ~

Goodbye 2005, Hello 2006! NGO-JICA Japan Desk Philippines would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for being part in our activities for 2005. Special thanks to the organizations and individuals who agreed to be featured in our Newsletter. We hope to be able to serve you better for the coming year so please do not hesitate to send us your comments or suggestions for the improvement of our activities. You are also welcome to suggest topics which you want to be featured in the Newsletter. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year Everyone! (M.B.)



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