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Pantawid Pamilyang
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INSPIRE

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Students in Bantayan Island, Cebu reading their books salvaged from the devastation of Typhoon Yolanda.

BANTAYAN ISLAND: ISOLATED BUT NOT DESERTED

by May Anne Ramos

While all eyes were on Tacloban City after Typhoon Yolanda hit the country, many were not aware that Bantayan Island in Central Visayas became isolated from the rest of the world. For three days since the typhoon made landfall, no boat could sail from Bantayan Island to Cebu Island to ask for help and relief goods. No modes of telecommunication were available and the power was down. The island was inaccessible.

But Bantayanons remained strong and resilient amid the destruction. With their hopeful hearts and strong desire to rebuild their community, they were able to start getting their lives together even they were isolated from the rest of the world.

A certified travel destination

Bantayan Island is located in the Visayan Sea and can be reached via pump boat from Cebu Island. Dubbed as one of the world's must-visit travel destinations, it boasts of its crystal blue waters and pristine sand that captivate the heart of every tourist visiting the island. It is composed of three municipalities - Bantayan, Madridejos, and Sta. Fe. Most Bantayanons depend on fishing and poultry as sources of livelihood.

Life in Bantayan Island is slow and relaxing. Thanks to the beautiful scenery and peaceful atmosphere, many local and foreign tourists go to the island, usually in the municipality of Sta. Fe where 32 beach resorts are located.

Inside a washing machine

On November 8 last year, the serene island got almost washed out by Typhoon Yolanda's powerful wind and storm surge that displaced families and took thousands of lives. Eastern Visayas was badly hit, but Bantayan Island was not spared. The Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) reported that as of December 2013, a total of 38,200 household-beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program were affected by the typhoon in Cebu province. These households were located within the 50-kilometer radius of Typhoon Yolanda. In Bantayan Island, there were 9,280 household-beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilya suffered from the damages that the typhoon brought.

Alphaminda Saagundo, Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer (MSWDO) of Sta. Fe, shared that the town was like inside a washing machine when the typhoon arrived.

"Maliwanag 'yung ulap sa umaga. Hindi mo aakalain na uulan, pero noong tanghali dumating na 'yung bagyo. Natumba 'yung mga puno, bahay, at poste ng kuryente. Para kaming nasa washing machine. Lahat lumilipad dahil sa lakas ng hangin (The skies were clear in the morning. You wouldn't suspect it would rain, but the typhoon came at noon and its wind washed away the trees, houses, and electrical posts. We were like inside a washing machine. The wind was so strong. Everything was flying)," she said.

Pantawid Pamilya beneficiary Vilma Mahipos, 42, shared that the typhoon wreaked havoc when it arrived. She survived by staying inside a car parked in

their auto repair shop. She, together with her husband and eldest son, witnessed how the typhoon washed away their house. They are now temporary staying in a shelter box given to them by a humanitarian group.

"Nasira talaga 'yung bahay namin. Walang natira. Buti na lang 'yung ibang anak ko na-evacuate namin sa bahay ng kapatid ko kaya safe sila. Ako naman nakaligtas dahil nagtago kami sa loob ng kotse (Our house was completely destroyed. Nothing was left. Good thing my kids were safe when we evacuated them to my sister's house. I was saved by hiding inside a car)," she narrated.

Help came pouring in

Three days after the typhoon, Madridejos MSWDO Eduardo Santillan Jr. went to Cebu Island to ask for help for his *kababayans*.

He related, *"Sumakay ako sa unang barko na pumuntang Cebu Island para humingi ng tulong. Walang kuryente kaya lugar namin. Wala rin signal ang cellphone kaya wala kaming contact sa mga tao sa labas ng island (I took the first ferry that went to Cebu Island to ask for help. There was no electricity in our place. There was also no cell phone signal so we did not have any contact outside our island)."*

The three municipalities are all grateful to those who have extended help, including DSWD, the local government, and various humanitarian organizations.



Yee family takes their dinner outside after "Yolanda" destroyed their house.



INSPIRE



INSPIRE is a collection of heart-warming stories of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program beneficiaries and workers. It hopes to inspire and motivate everyone to rise above life's challenges.

INSPIRE is produced by the Social Marketing Unit of Pantawid Pamilya.

Pantawid Pamilya is a human development program of the national government implemented through DSWD. It invests in human capital by ensuring the health and education of children aged 0-18.

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INSPIRE ■

The typhoon victims have received food packs, temporary shelters, and other aid that could help them cope with the effects of the calamity.

For Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries like the family of Chelsy Faith Yee from Madridejos, the cash grant they received after the typhoon helped them buy essentials for their house and new school supplies for the children. She thanked Pantawid Pamilya for the cash assistance it provides to her three siblings.

"Sana magpatuloy ang suporta ng programa sa mga kapatid ko para makapagtapos sila ng pag-aaral (I hope the program continues to support my siblings so they can finish their studies)," said Chelsy.

Moving forward

Months after the typhoon, many Bantayanons are still rebuilding their lives. Some are still fixing their house, while there are fishermen who are not yet done repairing their boats. There are kids who have recovered and went back to school, while few get scared of heavy rains and strong winds.

The recovery will take years for *Bantayanons*, but they remain hopeful and optimistic that the sun will always shine in their beautiful island. ■



Pantawid Pamilya Parent Leaders in Madridejos, Northern Cebu help facilitate the distribution of relief goods to their fellow Cebuanos.

INGREDIENTS TO RECOVERY

by Marie Grace Ponce

The aroma of the fried chicken, the piquant smell of *sinigang*, and the inviting presentation of *chopsuey* – these welcome customers who drop by a small eatery in Guiuan, Eastern Samar. The sumptuous dishes displayed are very inviting, especially to those who are already starving. Who would have thought a carenderia will sprout in the town proper of Guiuan after it was ravaged by super Typhoon Yolanda?

“Yolanda” made its first landfall in this municipality causing the whole town reduced to rubble. The Church of the Immaculate Conception, declared by the National Museum a National Cultural Treasure (NCT), and the American-era Regional Trial Court building are just ruins now. Looking at the extent of the damage brought about by the typhoon, one would think that it will take some time for the people to recover.

With tears in her eyes, Aling Juliana Dy, a *Pantawid Pamilya* beneficiary recalled the day the typhoon devastated their town.

“Di na namin alam kung anong gagawin o kung saan kami pupunta. Masyadong malakas ang hangin. Nasira na ang aming pintuan. Nagliliparan na yung mga yero. Nilipad na ‘yung bubong at nagbagsakan na ‘yung aming mga dingding. Naisip ko, ‘paano na kaya ang mga anak ko.’ Mabuti inilikas namin sila bago pa man ang bagyo (We did not know what to do or where to go. The wind was so strong. It broke down our door and roof. The walls of our house started to collapse.



Aling Juliana Dy, with her son, recounts how she and her husband survived the typhoon that washed away their home.

I thought about my kids. Thankfully, they evacuated before the storm arrived),” she recounted. She took their kids to the house of her sister-in-law.

When the storm was finally over, Juliana and her husband walked for few hours to reach the town proper where their kids were temporarily housed. She and her husband survived by taking shelter under the sink.

“Pagkakita ko sa mga anak ko, niyakap ko sila agad at nagpasalamat na ligtas kaming lahat (I immediately hugged my kids when I saw them. I’m thankful that we are all safe),” added Juliana.

Few days after the typhoon, there was already scarcity of food in the town. The people just depended on the relief goods distributed by the government and other organizations helping them at that time.

"Marami sa amin dito ang nawalan ng hanap-buhay. Ang pangunahing pinagkakakitaan ay pangingisda, pero maraming nawalan ng bangka, walang pagkakakitaan. 'Yung iba sa amin umaasa na lang sa tulong ng gobyerno (Many of us lost our livelihood. The main source of income is fishing, but since most of us lost our boats, we don't have any income. Many of us are just relying on the assistance given by the government)," she lamented.

It was a few weeks after the dreaded typhoon when Aling Juliana and her sister-in-law decided to sell cooked viands in front of their house.

"Madami ang naghahanap ng lutong ulam dito. Naisip ko bakit hindi kami magluto baka sakaling kumita kami. Ginamit namin ang cash grant ko sa Pantawid Pamilya at 'yung kaunting ipon ng ang aking hipag na pang puhunan namin (People are looking for

for cooked food here. I thought of cooking dishes to sell that might help us get through. We used our cash grant from Pantawid Pamilya my sister-in-law's savings as capital)," she explained.

Juliana admitted that up until now, their income is still unstable. She knows that much work has to be done before things will get back to normal. Her family has yet to recover financially and emotionally, but in the midst of adversity, a bud of hope blooms in her heart.

"Sana tayo ay makabangon ulit. Kailangan matibay ang ating dibdib at tingnan natin kung ano pang magandang gawin. Huwag na natin masyadong isipin ang nangyari na, bagkus tignan natin kung paano tayo makakatulong at paano natin tutulungan ang sarili natin na makatayong muli (Hopefully, we will rise again. Let us be strong and see what we can do. Let us not dwell so much on what happened, and instead let us see how else we can help ourselves and what we can do to rise above adversity)," Juliana concluded. ■



As they start rebuilding their lives, Aling Juliana converts her house into a small carinderia.

ON BEING GRATEFUL

by May Anne Ramos

While Typhoon Yolanda washed away houses and livelihood of people in the affected areas, it has also brought out the best in many Filipinos. The local and national government, private companies, humanitarian organizations, and ordinary citizens came to work together. Donations and relief goods keep pouring in and volunteers reach out to help rebuild the affected communities.

With all the help and compassion extended to the victims, Edgar Uy is grateful that a lot of people shared his passion and commitment to help others especially in that time of great need. Edgar is the Pantawid Pamilya City Link in Bogu City, Cebu.

"Masaya ako na maraming tumutulong sa mga nabiktima ng bagyo. Hindi kami masyadong nasalanta dito compared sa Tacloban pero marami rin ang nawalan ng bahay at kabuhayan (I am happy that many people helped the typhoon victims. Our area was not as devastated as Tacloban but many here lost their house and livelihood)," he said.

Edgar sometimes advises Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries to include volunteers and donors in their prayers.

"That's the least that we can do to those who give help. If we cannot thank them personally, isama natin sila sa prayers (let us pray for them). Sinasabi ko sa kanila na marami sa mga volunteers at workers ay biktima rin ng bagyo kaya huwag natin silang kalilimutan. 'Yung iba sa kanila taga-DSWD din na nawalan ng bahay pero nagsersebisyo pa rin (I tell them that many of the volunteers and workers were also typhoon victims so we must not forget about them. Some of

Edgar Uy, City Link of Bogu City



Rosela Senadhan shares how Edgar has become a friend to her and other beneficiaries.

them are DSWD employees who lost their homes but are still in service)," Edgar said.

A confidant, a friend

Municipal/City Links are the Pantawid Pamilya's frontliners in the communities. Edgar gives so much more than the tasks that are expected from him to deliver as he has also become a good friend to some of beneficiaries in Bogo City.

"Iba talaga yung saya na nararamdaman ko kapag alam kong nakatulong sa kanila. Natutuwa ako na nagtitiwala sila sa akin. Yung iba kaibigan ang turing nila sa akin (I feel really happy when I get to help them. I'm happy that they trust me and treat me as their friend)," he said.

Rosela Senadhan, a Pantawid Pamilya beneficiary, sent Edgar a text message when her house was devastated by Typhoon Yolanda.

"Sabi ko, 'Sir, wala na kaming bahay.' Kahit mahirap pumunta dito kasi maraming mga puno at poste na natumba pumunta agad siya para kumustahin kami at magbigay ng lakas ng loob (I texted him, 'Sir, we've lost our house.' Even if it was difficult to get here because of the fallen trees and electrical posts he went anyway to check on us and comfort us)," said the parent leader from Brgy.

La Purisima Concepcion.

"I was the first person she contacted after the typhoon. I went to her house *kasi alam ko kailangan nila ng tulong*. (I knew they needed help.) *Hindi man ako nakatulong* financially, *napalakas ko naman ang loob nilang mag-anak* (I wasn't able to help them financially, but I got to give her and her family confidence to be strong)," he said.

Passion for work

Edgar used to be a nurse but found his calling as a City Link for Pantawid Pamilya. Despite the challenging tasks given to Pantawid Pamilya workers, he is always effervescent and passionate about his profession.

"*Dati akong nurse at nagtrabaho rin ako sa NHTS-PR pero na-realize ko nasa Pantawid Pamilya ang calling ko. Masaya magtrabaho kapag alam mong nakakatulong ka* (I used to be a nurse, and I also worked with NHTS-PR, but I realized that my calling is in Pantawid Pamilya. It is inspiring if you know you are helping people)," Edgar shared, adding that he does not mind working for longer hours just to serve the beneficiaries in his city.

To inspire other Pantawid Pamilya workers nationwide, he has a piece of advice on how to truly enjoy work.

"*Wala naman talagang madaling trabaho. Lahat ng trabaho mahirap. Nagiging madali lang ang isang bagay kapag yung puso at interest mo nandoon* (There is no such thing as an easy job. All jobs are difficult. A task only becomes easier to accomplish if you put your heart in it)," he concluded. ■

Peter and his family remain hopeful after "Yolanda."



LOVE FOR SERVICE

by Hazel Ruth Santiago

Peter Gabuco has been a Municipal Link (ML) for three years. His strong belief in the program pushes him to do his best in serving the beneficiaries round-the-clock. When Typhoon Yolanda hit the Municipality of Culion in Palawan, Peter was part of the municipal teams that prepared the evacuation centers. They went to different barangays to inform the residents about the necessary preparations before the typhoon. They used the Family Development Sessions (FDS) as a venue to educate the residents on disaster preparedness and resiliency.

Passion for family and service

Peter was born and raised in Cuyo Island, a fourth class municipality in Palawan. He is married and has one child. His wife and daughter are his top priority, that is why when he accepted the offer to work in Culion, he took them with him.

While he was busy checking on the evacuees the day after the typhoon came, one of the municipal staff told him that his house was one of the many properties that the typhoon washed out.

"Gusto kong maglingkod kung saan ako tinatawag. Nandito ako sa Palawan at dito ako maglilingkod."



"Bagoong at dilis na lang po ang natira sa bahay ko. Lahat ng napundar ko sa loob ng mahigit tatlong taon, naanod na lahat (I lost everything I invested and saved for over three years. Everything was washed out. Only dried fish and fish paste were left)," he narrated.

His wife and eight-month old baby were both shocked with the typhoon's aftermath. They were so distraught that the baby refused to feed on milk or any solid food for days.

Peter, however, felt lucky with the support and comfort that his fellow Pantawid Pamilya staff and municipal employees gave him.

He shared, *"Madali po kaming nakarecover dahil sobrang daming nag-comfort sa amin (We were able to recover easily because many people were there to comfort us)."*

Motivation to serve

When asked why he is still determined to serve despite being a typhoon victim, Peter shared, *"Mas maganda pa rin ang ganitong buhay kasi marami kang natutulungan. Kasi tayo, mabilis tayong maka-recover dahil may stable income tayo. Pero 'yung mga beneficiary natin, mas kailangan nila ang tulong dahil lugmok sila (This kind of life is much better because I get to help many people. I can easily recover as I have a stable income, but the beneficiaries are not as fortunate so they need more assistance)."*

Peter firmly believes in the intention and objectives of Pantawid Pamilya. He is an advocate of education thus he supports the program's efforts in reaching even the most remote areas of the country to promote education.

During FDS, he always encourages parents to work hard and prioritize their children's education.

"Sinasabi ko sa kanila na dapat ipayo n'yo sa mga anak n'yo na hindi sila dapat makuntento sa Grade III. Sabihan nila ang mga bata na sila ang papalit sa mga nagtuturo sa kanila (I tell them that they should teach their children to aim high and do not be contented with finishing Grade III. Their kids should be the next teachers)," he said.

Peter feels honored to be able to serve as Pantawid Pamilya's Municipal Link. He was filled with joy as he recounted how the calling to be part of the program gave him opportunities to serve fellow Filipinos.

"Hangga't 'di natatapos ang programa, hindi ako aalis. Naniniwala ako sa programa. Gusto kong maglingkod kung saan ako tinawag. Nandito ako sa Palawan at dito ako maglilingkod (As long as the program is here, I will not stop serving. I have faith in it. I want to serve where I was called. I am in Palawan and I will serve here)." ■



Peter's house after the typhoon.

WONDER MOM

by May Anne Ramos

Forty-two-year old Sheila Toning deserves to be called a "Wonder Mom." And why not? Aside from being a full-time mother to four children and a wife to her husband, she also is also a Pantawid Pamilya Parent Leader in Brgy. Gairan, Bogo City in Cebu. She is a manicurist and a hairstylist. There is nothing she would not do for her family, especially for her kids. So when part of their house was torn down by Typhoon Yolanda, she did not hesitate to fix it by herself.

"Siguro mga tatlong araw pa bago ako nahimasmasan at ayusin ang bahay namin. Talagang na-shock kami sa damage na ginawa ng bagyo sa bahay namin (It took me about three days before I got on my feet and decided to fix our house. We were all shocked with the damage the typhoon caused our house)," Sheila said.

Her husband was working in Manila when the typhoon made landfall on November 8 last year. With no money to pay for the services of a carpenter, she decided to repair their house by herself. It was a job for a man, but she did not seem to mind the danger of climbing on their roof.

She related, *"Bumili na lang ako ng pako para mapagdikit-dikit ko yung mga natirang kahoy at yero sa bahay namin. Inakyat ko 'yung bubong para hindi na pumasok yung tubig sa loob. Wala naman akong ibang choice kundi ayusin ang bahay namin. Para sa mga anak ko iyon. Nasasaktan akong natutulog sila sa kusina kasi nasira yung bubong namin (I just bought nails to repair our house. I fixed the roof and ceiling so the rain will not get inside. I had no other choice but to fix it. It was for my kids. It pained me to see them sleeping in the kitchen because our roof was wrecked)."*



Shiela, the Wonder Mom, and her family dream of owning a house that can withstand any typhoon.

Proud of what she did, she asked her daughter to take pictures of her fixing their roof. After her carpentry work was done she showed the photos to her City Link and co-Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries hoping she could inspire them.

For Sheila, repairing their house by herself was out of necessity. It was something that she had to do to give her kids a decent place to sleep in. But for her children, it was an act of love that they truly appreciate.

"Kinuwento ko sa mga kaklase ko na Mama ko ang nag-ayos ng bahay namin. Sabi nila Wonder Mom daw siya. Proud ako sa kanya hindi lang sa pag-aayos ng bahay kung di sa lahat ng ginagawa niya para sa aming magkakapatid (I told my classmates that it was Mama who fixed our house. They said she is Wonder Mom. I am proud of her not only for what she did to our house but also to all that she does for me and my siblings)," said Jiji, Sheila's daughter.



Toning mother blah blah blah



Toning mother blah blah blah



Sheila often goes around the barangay to offer manicure and hairstyling services. This is also her way of helping her husband, a construction worker, to earn more.

Just like other mothers, Sheila dreams that all her children will finish college. She is thankful for being a Pantawid Pamilya beneficiary. The cash grant helps her send her kids to school. She proudly shares that her children

are doing well in school and determined to finish their studies.

"Masipag silang mag-aral kaya nga sana makatapos sila ng college (They are hardworking students that is why I hope they could finish college)," Sheila related.

Joelyn, Sheila's second child, promised to finish her studies so she can give her Mama a big house: a house that can withstand any typhoon. ■

INSPIRE ■

IN PICTURES

Photos of “Yolanda” survivors on
their way to recovery



(A) Students of Lajala Elementary School are excited to attend classes on a Saturday morning. Make up classes were scheduled in different barangay islands of Coron affected by Typhoon Yolanda. Children also played their part in restoring the orderliness of their school as they take shifting hours to paint the fences and clean debris inside the school's vicinity.



(A) Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries in Sta. Fe, Bantayan Island help hand-in-hand in restoring the beauty of their municipality.



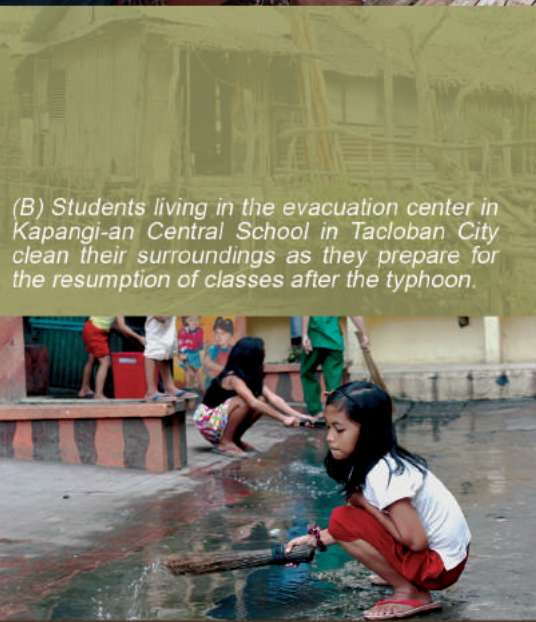
(R) Fishermen sail ashore as the fishing industry in Daanbantayan, Cebu recovers.



(R) Children of Culion, Palawan take delight in their new-found companion and toy. A broken refrigerator out of the rubble became an instant source of joy for them. Playing outdoors has become therapeutic for the kids who survived the calamity.



(L) Rizalina and Ronie Coyoca of Borbon, Cebu shows what is left in their harvest after Typhoon Yolanda. They will plant these corn seeds for the next harvest season. For the couple, they signify a start of a better and a more abundant life.



(A) Bantayanons remain steadfast as a community in a "tent city" in Sta. Fe, Bantayan Island.

BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

by Marie Grace Ponce

Jaymar Albao, a Pantawid Pamilya's focal person for Indigenous Peoples rendered duty for the Regional Quick Response Team (QRT) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in Region VIII last November 8. QRT is DSWD's response team that gives immediate assistance to local government units and disaster victims. The regional office activated its QRT even before Typhoon Yolanda made landfall.

The disaster was an unforgettable experience for Jaymar.

"It was around two in the morning when we decided to call it a day. Our Director said that we could stay in the Regional Office but I decided to go home. I was worried about my housemates who were all students from UP Tacloban," said Jaymar, the *Kuya* in their boarding house.

Though he and his housemates prepared for the typhoon, they were not expecting the strong wind and the extent of the damage 'Yolanda' brought.

"At 5 AM, I was awakened by the strong gust of wind. Peeping through the window I could see the trees swaying. I immediately called up my family to check on them and to remind them to be safe. Electricity and lines of communication were cut off at 6. There was no way for us to contact people or even check what was happening outside," he recalled.

Crawl, don't run

The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) reported that Typhoon Yolanda was the strongest cyclone to hit the country in 2013. Documented as one of the most powerful storms ever recorded to strike land, 'Yolanda' made at least five major landfalls affecting the central part of Visayas. DSWD reported on March that there were more than 1.4 million families affected by the typhoon. Around one million families were displaced and half a million lost their homes.

Jaymar's boarding house is located within the compound of UP Tacloban in Magsaysay Boulevard, which is just a few meters away from the coastline fronting the Pacific Ocean. Due to the frightening rains and wind, they decided to leave the dormitory.

"The typhoon blew off our dormitory's roof and debris started falling. We were soaked from the rain so we decided to leave. But the wind was so strong. We had a hard time running so we went back to the dormitory. After several minutes, we realized that staying indoors could be more dangerous. We had no choice but to crawl out of the dormitory until we reached the university library," shared Jaymar.

'Longest 45 minutes'

Thinking that they were safe in the library, Jaymar and his housemates stayed there for a while. The strong wind, however, collided with the gushing seawater brought about by the storm surge. This submerged the city in water.



Jaymar can now smile after the incident which brought "horrible and heartbreaking" events.

"I saw people, kids and adults, clinging to one another. Some of them were praying. The children were crying, and the elders were already chilling. There were people climbing up the trees. We stayed in the library for 45 minutes not knowing what would happen to us. It was the longest 45 minutes of my life," he said.

Together with the people who were trapped in the library, Jaymar waited until the water subsided. As soon as the water was about chest level, he and his housemates started to help those who were up the trees. They found a rope that helped the victims from other buildings cross the raging water going to the library. But one woman refused to cross the water.

"We told her that we were all going to die if she would not go with us. She was only wearing a shirt so I decided to give her my extra pair of shorts," Jaymar shared.

In the afternoon, the skies started to clear up and they left the library. Some went to check what was left of their home, while some looked for their loved ones.

Still willing to serve

Jaymar described the aftermath as "horrible and heart-breaking."

Despite the catastrophe, Jaymar never thought of leaving his work. He knew that the Department and his country needed people like him who would help the survivors get through the dreadful experience.

"The tragedy taught me a lot of lessons. It made me realize how important it is to be of service to those who are in need. My job is very rewarding. I am more than willing to serve even after all that happened," Jaymar concluded. ■

THERE IS HOPE

by Hazel Ruth Santiago

Hope is defined in the dictionary as “a desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment of success.” Hope seems a good thing to hold on to, but for many people who are going through difficult times, hope could be useless.

The only place you would want to be during a calamity is beside your whole family. However for Janet Mayo, it was impossible as his husband needed to work somewhere else.

When Typhoon Yolanda struck their island barangay in Lajala, Coron, she evacuated her children to her mother's house. She wished her husband was with them during that time.

Janet got more worried when she heard the news that her husband got injured while securing his company's boat. Upon hearing the news, she was almost out of control. It was her 11-year-old daughter who comforted her saying, “*Nay, kakayanin natin 'to* (Mom, we can get through this).”

Janet's heart melted upon hearing the words of her daughter. She was reminded how her husband was so determined to work hard for their family.

“Binibilin niya palagi na 'pag may sakit ang mga bata, sa simula pa lang, dalhin agad sa ospital para mapatingnan. Sa Culion dapat tayo lagi didirecho dahil mas magaling ang mga doktor dun. Dapat siguraduhin natin yung mga bagay o desisyon para mga bata (He always



Janet with her son. She almost lost hope when 'Yolanda' came and destroyed their house. It was her 11-year-old daughter who assured her that they will get through their misfortune.

tells me to bring the kids to the hospital right away when they get sick. We should bring them to Culion because the island has better doctors. We must always ensure the things or our decisions that we make for the kids,” she shared.

Same values

Janet and her husband share the same values when it comes to their children's health and well-being. This is one of the things that they learned from attending Family Development Sessions (FDS).

FDS is a monthly session that parent-grantees of the program are required to attend. It is a venue where topics on building stronger family relationship, child rearing, and understanding and respecting the rights of family members are discussed.

"Kahit mahirap tayo, dapat laging malusog ang mga anak natin. Yan lagi ang sabi ng asawa ko (Our children should always be healthy even if we are poor. That is what my husband always tells me)," she related.

Janet also has a piece of advice for her kids. *"Lagi ko pong binibilinan ang mga anak ko na mapatuloy sila sa kung anong meron kami dahil ito ang pamana at pinaghirapan ni Tatay para sa amin (I always remind my kids to continue with what we have because their father worked hard for all of these)," she said.*

Hope rises

While her husband only gets a meager salary, Janet never complained about it. Instead she looks for ways and means to help him.

They started reconstructing their house out of the salvaged materials. She intends to use their cash grant from Pantawid Pamilya to buy school supplies, bags, shoes and clothes for

her children. She will also set aside some of his husband's earnings to buy materials for the repair of their house.

Janet also hopes to start a small business.

"Magtatayo rin po ako ng maliit na tiangge para may mapagkukunan kaming mag-iina (I will also put up a small store as our source of additional income for my family)," she shared.

When asked what keeps her going despite the challenges that they face after the typhoon, Janet said, *"Noong nakita kong halos walang natira sa bahay ko at sira-sira, tapos nalaman ko pa ang nangyari sa asawa ko, parang gusto kong magwala. Pero naisip ko, may dalawa pa akong anak Mabubuhay at kakayanin ko ito para sa kanila dahil may pag-asa pa talaga para sa amin (When I saw what happened with our house and heard what happened to my husband, I felt like going berserk. But then I get reminded that I still have two kids. I will live and be strong for them, there is still hope for us)." ■*



Janet's house undergoing renovation.

KIDS TO THE RESCUE

by Joven Santiago

Always be ready - this is what Venus Ilustrisimo of Brgy. Poblacion, Madridejos, Cebu taught her children. She tells them to prepare for a disaster situation. Venus is among the beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program who were affected when Typhoon Yolanda made landfall in Bantayan Island, Cebu.

Venus and her family live near the shoreline but they were able to survive the wrath of the typhoon by evacuating to the nearest center. They left most of their belongings just to secure their five children. She also proudly shared that the night before the supertyphoon Yolanda came, her 11-year-old daughter Cristina made a survival pack containing canned goods and rice.





*Kids learned to be dependable in
times of crisis.*

INSPIRE ■



Maricel Golosino shares how her eldest daughter helped in evacuating before 'Yolanda.'

"Natutunan namin yung disaster preparedness sa Family Development Sessions (FDS). Tinuturo ko rin sa mga anak ko yung ibang pinag-uusapan namin sa session (I learned about disaster preparedness in the Family Development Sessions. I teach my kids some of the lessons we discuss in the session)," she said.

Maricel Golosino, also a beneficiary of Pantawid Pamilya from Brgy. Talangnan, shared how her daughter helped her during the typhoon. She was pregnant to her eighth child that time. While she and her husband prepared for

evacuation, her 11-year-old daughter Docel tried to keep her siblings calm.

"Mahalaga na maging kalmado sa panahon ng kalamidad, sabi sa amin sa FDS. Dapat hindi tayo mag-panic. Napulot din ng anak ko 'yung aral na 'yan sa akin (It is important to stay calm in times of calamity, according to the FDS lecture I attended. We should not panic. My daughter learned that from me as well)," Maricel said, adding that her eldest daughter has become more responsible in taking care of her siblings since the super typhoon.

Attending FDS is one of the conditionalities of Pantawid Pamilya. During the sessions, the beneficiaries of the program learn practical lessons that they can use in raising their family and managing their household. One month before the super typhoon hit, disaster preparedness was reiterated during the FDS thus most of the beneficiaries in the municipality were ready when the disaster struck.

Conducting FDS is a unique component of Pantawid Pamilya.

It is one of the program's ways of planting a sustainable and inclusive growth to the beneficiaries.

Venus and Maricel are just two of the millions of Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries who attend FDS; just two among the millions of parents who share their learnings to their children. As different disasters come and go, it is important that the vulnerable are equipped with proper knowledge on how to be prepared – not only for disasters but to anything that can go their way. ■



Venus Illustrisimo taught her kids to be disaster-ready.



Learning in Bantayan Island continues in makeshift tents after Typhoon Yolanda destroyed most of the island's classrooms.

LEARNING IN TENTS

by Joven Santiago

Schools are children's second home. It is where they discover new things, develop their skills, unleash their potentials, and strive to achieve their dreams. But what if both their house and school got destroyed? Should it stop them from learning and dreaming?

For the children of Bantayan Island, it should not. On the morning of November 8, 2013, Typhoon Yolanda made its fourth landfall on this island in Northern Cebu, leaving 253 schools damaged or about 90 percent of the total number

of schools in the area. The typhoon may have ravaged the schools but not the importance of education to the *Bantayanons*.

Bayanihan in Bantayan

As the local and national government respond to the disaster with the help of various international humanitarian aids, the residents of the three municipalities of Bantayan Island started picking up the broken pieces of their lives.

Ma. Argeline Adlaon, a Pantawid





Pamilya Parent Leader, is one of the hundreds of parents who did their own initiative of reconstructing the dilapidated classrooms. She and other parents decided to help in repairing the schools as they do not want their kids to be discouraged by the effects of the disaster.

"Turo sa amin ng Pantawid Pamilya na mahalaga ang edukasyon ng mga bata, kaya kahit kami-kami lang, tumulong kami na maayos 'yung mga eskwelahan para makapasok na rin sa 'yung mga bata. Kahit na sa tent lang, basta makapag-aral

na ulit sila (Pantawid Pamilya taught us the importance of education that is why we decided to help in rebuilding schools so that our children can already attend their classes. Even if they hold classes in a tent, it is all right as long as they can study again)," said Argeline.

Makeshift classrooms

Two months after the storm, classes resumed in Bantayan Island, but not to how it was. What used to be the school quadrangle became the cradle of makeshift classrooms.



Ninety percent of the total number of schools in Bantayan Island was destroyed, making school quadrangles the home of makeshift classrooms.

There are 9,587 household beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilya in Bantayan Island, with 12,206 school age (3-18 years old) children being monitored by the program for education (as of May 28, 2014).

Amelita Espinosa, a substitute teacher in Okoy Elementary School, shared that the children were very sad after they saw what happened to their school. Despite this, they are still enthusiastic to go back to school. They also did their share in helping the school by drying the pages of their books and the visual aids under the sun.

Many of Teacher Amelita's students are beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilya who were very excited to go back to school.

Eight-year-old Judith Mhar Quijano lost her home to 'Yolanda,' but going back to school and being safe after the typhoon are more important to her. She is thankful not only to Pantawid Pamilya for the continued support but to those who gave her and her classmates new school supplies as well.

"Masaya po kami na ligtas kami pagkatapos ng bagyo at meron na ulit kaming gamit sa school (We are happy that we are safe after the typhoon and that we have new school supplies)," Judith said.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), through its flagship social protection program Pantawid Pamilya, sees the importance of education in fighting the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

DSWD Secretary Corazon Soliman said, "It is very positive to see that the children beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilya are enthusiastic to go back to school after the typhoon. Despite the disaster, these children were not discouraged to start studying again, in fact, they even find school therapeutic."

The school buildings and classrooms in Bantayan Island will be completely rehabilitated soon. Houses will be built again. Lives will be back to normal. But there is no other powerful sign of recovery than the dynamism and willingness of the children to learn. Their positivity will always be there, and no typhoon can ever wash it away. ■

The children in Bantayan Island did not lose their interest in school even after the typhoon destroyed their classrooms.





Nelson Cablasan tries to move on from his tragic past caused by 'Yolanda.'

IN THE EYES OF A CHILD

by Marie Grace Ponce

"Hanggang ngayon, hindi ko lubos maisip na wala na ang aking nanay at kapatid. Iniisip ko pa rin sila. Kung sana nakinig lang ang nanay ko sa akin baka buhay pa sila (I still can't believe that my mother and my sister are now gone. If only Mother listened to me, maybe they are still alive)," said 18-year old Nelson Cablasan as he remembered the tragic incident on the fateful day of November 8, 2013.

Jayson Makaya, 15, shared, *"Nasa astrodome po kami. Noong ala-singko ng umaga, nagkagulo na ang mga tao dahil tumaas na ang tubig. Naghiwa-hiwalay kaming pamilya dahil natakot kami sa stampede. Pagkatapos ng bagyo, marami akong nakitang patay. Malapit sa aming bahay, maraming patay. Yung iba mga kaibigan ko. Yung iba, namatay kasi hindi sila lumikas (At 5:00 a.m. there was commotion in the astrodome because the water suddenly rose. We were*

afraid it would cause stampede so we left. After the water subsided, I saw a lot of dead people. Some of them are my friends)."

Nelson and Jayson are two children who came from two adjacent municipalities heavily affected by Typhoon Yolanda. While Jayson's family survived the tragic incident, Nelson's mother and sister were among the fatalities.

According to the data released by the Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center in December, a total of 380,207 Pantawid Pamilya households were victims of the typhoon.

"We recognize the effect of the typhoon not only to the adults but most especially to the children. Few days after the typhoon, the Department mobilized personnel to conduct Critical Incident Stress

Debriefing (CISD). CISD helps the survivors overcome the trauma caused by this incident. We have also conducted play therapy to help the children cope with the situation," shared Secretary Corazon Juliano-Soliman of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Early this year, Pantawid Pamilya also resumed conducting Family Development Session (FDS), especially to those families who are still in the evacuation centers and those who were transferred to the bunk houses. FDS became a venue for debriefing the victims.

"DSWD encourages the participation of other organizations in conducting FDS

and CISD. We understand the needs of these survivors in the same manner that we acknowledge our own limitations in helping the survivors fully recover," Soliman said.

Among the organizations helping DSWD is Yakap Foundation, an organization that concentrates in providing trauma healing through games and activities.

Val Magbanua, Senior Facilitator of the foundation shares, "We have been conducting trauma healing sessions for a long time, and in fact, we also extended help to the victims of the Zamboanga siege and Bohol earthquake. The survivors of calamities or tragedies need people who will lift their spirits, most especially the children."



Jason Makaya looks forward to better days after the typhoon left his family with nothing.

Jayson and his family were temporarily sheltered at the Kapangian Central School. He draws strength from his family and the people helping them to recover such as Yakap Foundation.

“Sa mga batang kagaya ko na naging biktima ng bagyo, sana matuto rin tayong tumayo at tulungan ang ating sarili para hindi malugmok sa sitwasyon natin. At sana tuluy-tuloy pa rin ang tulong na naibibigay sa amin ng gobyerno (I hope the children who are also victims of the typhoon will learn to stand and help themselves to recover. I also hope that the government continues to help us),” Jayson, 15, shared.

Nelson still misses his mother and sister. He wished that this is just a bad dream about to end when he opens his eyes, but he knows

that this is reality – a reality that he needs to face every day.

“Alam ko hindi pa ako nakaka-recover, pero kailangang ipagpatuloy ko ang aking buhay lalo na’t ako ang tumatayong magulang sa mga kapatid ko ngayon. Nagpapasalamat nga ako sa Pantawid Pamilya. Dahil sa nakuha naming pera, nakabili ako ng damit ng mga kapatid ko. Nakabili rin kami ng gamit sa eskwela at saka mga pagkain (I know we haven’t fully recovered yet, but I need to continue living. My siblings depend on me. I am grateful to Pantawid Pamilya. I was able to buy clothes, school supplies, and food for my siblings using the cash grants),” he said.

In the eyes of Nelson and Jayson, young as they may be, their tragic experience have helped them grow and face life’s realities just like an adult. ■



DSWD and volunteer foundations debrief ‘Yolanda’ victims to help them cope with emotional trauma.