

INSPIRE

STORIES OF HOPE



Making change possible

Stories on women, livelihood, community service, and gradually overcoming the challenges brought by poverty

INSPIRE

INSPIRE is a collection of heartwarming 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 Division 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 poor children aged 0-18.

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On the cover:

Joshua Geno Cruz from Angat, Bulacan, is among the Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries who finished Senior High School (with honors) this year despite his disability.
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INSPIRE: Making change possible

Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program wants to end the plight the poor through enabling them to access health and education facilities and services. This way, the poor will have better chances of breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty within their households. But aside from giving them aid, Pantawid Pamilya also empowers beneficiaries through educating them during Family Development Sessions and linking them to livelihood opportunities and trainings that provide new knowledge and hone skills needed to sustain their gains from the program.

The stories in this edition of INSPIRE highlights how Pantawid Pamilya and the beneficiaries work together to make change possible. Stories on women, livelihood, and gradually overcoming the challenges brought about by poverty aim to encourage beneficiaries to avail of the assistance and services of Pantawid Pamilya and other government agencies.

The narratives of the top five finalists of the National Search for Huwarang Pantawid Pamilya 2018, meanwhile, inspire families to emulate their sense of unity and cooperation to improve their living condition and serve their community.

These stories prove that poor can shape their future if they are given the interventions that truly address their needs.



Marjorie Dulag, Pantawid Pamilya and SLP beneficiary from Baguio City.


Sustainable livelihood supports Pantawid Pamilya gains

Marjorie Dulag used to fear that the police would confiscate the vegetables she sold along the streets and sidewalks of Baguio City. Sidewalk vending was illegal but it was the only source of income of her family. If the goods were sequestered, there was a chance that Marjorie's family would not eat or buy other necessities.

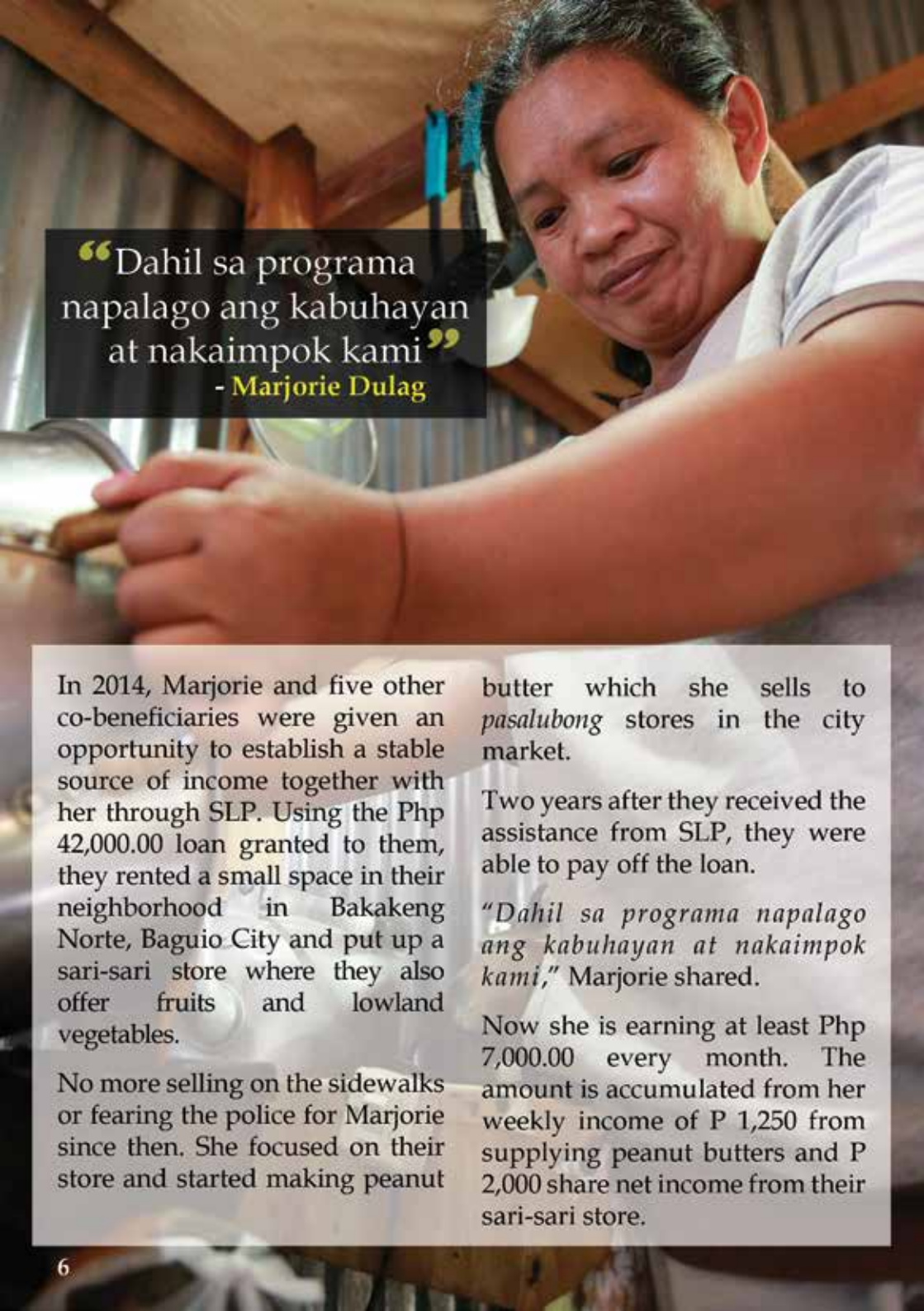
"Nagmakaawa ako sa pulis, kasama ang anak ko, na 'wag nalang kunin yung mga binebenta namin. Pero, kinuha parin nila," said the 41-year old mother of four as she recalled how the police seized the vegetables she tried to sell.

Making a living was also not wasy for Genoveva “Ebeng” Castro of Buenavista, Bohol. She learned handloom weaving when she was 13 years old. It was the only job that she knew. Her husband is a farmer, and the money they make combined still would not suffice to support their family of five. Ebeng’s children still all go to school and had high hopes of pursuing college education. But with Php8,000.00 monthly income, she knew it was not feasible.

Filipinos are born hardworking, however, a good opportunity to jumpstart a small business or improve skills does not always come by. Marjorie and Ebeng are two Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries who needed livelihood and capacity building assistance improve their living condition. Through the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the DSWD, the two women and other beneficiaries are given access to opportunities to start a sustainable livelihood, to be employed or trained to hone or gain new skills.



Genoveva “Ebeng” Castro,
Pantawid Pamilya and SLP
beneficiary from Bohol.



**“Dahil sa programa
napalago ang kabuhayan
at nakaimpok kami”
- Marjorie Dulag**

In 2014, Marjorie and five other co-beneficiaries were given an opportunity to establish a stable source of income together with her through SLP. Using the Php 42,000.00 loan granted to them, they rented a small space in their neighborhood in Bakakeng Norte, Baguio City and put up a sari-sari store where they also offer fruits and lowland vegetables.

No more selling on the sidewalks or fearing the police for Marjorie since then. She focused on their store and started making peanut

butter which she sells to *pasalubong* stores in the city market.

Two years after they received the assistance from SLP, they were able to pay off the loan.

“Dahil sa programa napalago ang kabuhayan at nakaimpok kami,” Marjorie shared.


Now she is earning at least Php 7,000.00 every month. The amount is accumulated from her weekly income of P 1,250 from supplying peanut butters and P 2,000 share net income from their sari-sari store.

Ebeng, meanwhile, was able to attend a training for handloom weavers conducted by the Department of Trade and Industry and SLP. She received a handloom machine as a starter kit so she could make different raffia designs that come in various colors. She used to only know weaving white raffia but now Ebeng makes colored placemats, table runners, braided raffia knots for kitchen pots and other decorative materials. From Php 2,000.00 monthly income in raffia weaving, the family now earns at least Php 7,200.00 a month.

The assistance from SLP did not only upgrade her skills but improved her confidence as well.

"Sauna, wa koy lain gihimo kundi mga plain lining ra sa raffia. Pero karon, akong pasalamat sa DSWD-SLP sa livelihood assistance nga ilang gihatag og sa DTI nga nag-train kanamo kay napun-an jud akong kahibalo sa paghabol og lain-lain nga disinyo sa raffia (Before, I only knew plain raffia weaving. And now, I am grateful to the DSWD-SLP for the livelihood assistance they have provided to us and to the DTI





Geneveva “Ebeng” Castro is a member of the Buenas Raffia Association, a raffia producer in the town of Buenavista, Bohol. They weave raffia for local and international trades.

which honed our skills because I can now weave various and creative raffia designs),” said Ebeng.

Like Marjorie and Ebeng, millions of Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries have benefitted from SLP through microenterprise development and employment facilitation. From January 2011 to September 2018, a total of 1,210,912 Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries were referred to and

funded by Micro-Finance Institutions and other formal lending institutions. There are 369,162 Pantawid Pamilya household beneficiaries were employed through Trabahong Lansangan in partnership with Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH). Through SLP, beneficiaries were also provided with guaranteed employment by various public and private partners as well.

A sustainable livelihood is important for beneficiaries to complement the Pantawid Pamilya cash grants they receive which are meant for their children's health and education. SLP beneficiaries can focus on managing their livelihood or job and need not worry about school and medical expenses. Their earnings are used to pay off the loan, operate their microenterprise, and augment their household income.

With a sustainable livelihood and ensured education and health assistance for their

children, Ebang is more confident to provide for her children's college education.

Marjorie is also relieved that she does not have to illegally sell vegetables on city sidewalks. She and her family have now a safe space for their livelihood.

"Naalala ko na sabi ng anak ko, Ma, maganda 'to na hindi na tayo nagtitinda kung saan saan na gilid," Marjorie happily shared.





Charliet Hingrat and her family

Working for inclusive dev

Pantawid Pamilya caters to the poorest of the poor Filipinos through ensuring that children beneficiaries have access to education and health services and linking their families to opportunities and interventions that can complement the investment made to the children. As a human development program, Pantawid Pamilya aims to provide opportunities to the poor and marginalized, including persons with disability (PWD), solo parents, and indigenous peoples who experience multiple layers of discrimination. It dreams of development that does not leave anyone behind.



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Supporting solo parents

As of September 2018, there are 269,522 solo parents in the program, representing 6.3% of the Pantawid Pamilya households nationwide. The “Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000” (R.A. 8972) recognizes solo parents as part of the disadvantaged sector in the country, and Pantawid Pamilya understands the plight that they go through every day in raising their families on their own.

Charliet Hingpit, 45, is a labandera. Doing other people’s laundry and accepting menial jobs have been her source of income to feed her six children since her husband left them in 2010. Being abandoned by her husband was one of the biggest challenges in Charliet’s life. Their provider was gone, and she needed to be in-charge. But the abandonment was a blessing in disguise because it meant that the beatings and cheating had ended. It was a moment to finally have a new beginning, she thought.

With Pantawid Pamilya, Charliet saw an opportunity to start a new life. It became her partner in addressing the health and education needs of her kids. The weight of raising them singlehandedly was eased.

“I’ve been through a lot especially when my husband left me. But those times made me realize my purpose as a mother, as a parent, and that is to provide the needs of my children. I may have no luck in having a responsible husband but at least I have my children, my treasures,” said the mother of six.

Being a solo parent made Charliet realized a lot of things about herself. The lessons on violence against women and their children (VAWC) and gender equality, which she learned from Family Development Sessions, helped her boost her self-worth. She became active in her community as a parent leader and member of Sustainable Livelihood Program-Payapa at Masaganang PamayaNan (SLP-PAMANA) in Diatagon, Lianga, Surigao del Sur.

In 2017, Charliet's family won the 2017 Regional Search for Huwarang Pantawid Pamilya in Caraga. She inspires them to be hard working and do their best.

"I am thankful to have a mother who is not just responsible but also our role model and inspiration to do good in our studies," said Jyles, her second son.

Pantawid Pamilya continues to improve as a program to support solo parents. DSWD Cagayan Valley, for instance, took the initiative to develop the FDS module "Special Sessions for Solo Parents" to empower solo parents a

nd increase their participation in FDS where discussions on gender-related topics require the attendance of husbands and wives. The module was launched during the Solo Parents Congress in 2017, and similar efforts are being conducted by the regional and national program management offices of Pantawid Pamilya to make solo parenting less burdensome for beneficiaries.



Juda Diclay, the first college graduate of the Tau't Bato tribe in Palawan

Equal opportunities for IPs

Mary Joy Baylon and Juda Diclay are indigenous peoples whose life stories involved a number of discrimination against their tribes and being a minority.

Mary Joy has probably heard all the possible insults against IPs and the color of her skin. She is an Ati living in an IP community in Sitio Igtuba, Brgy Camangahan in Guimbal, Iloilo. Livelihood opportunities are also limited in their community so like the other people in her tribe, she was born and raised poor. She sold vegetables and native delicacies in her neighborhood to help her family make ends meet.

Twenty-five-year-old Juda Diclay, on the other hand, experienced a lot of demeaning from other people before becoming the first college graduate of the Tau't Bato tribe in Palawan. Most of the children in her tribe gave up their dream of getting a college diploma because the opportunity for a formal education is so rare and the discrimination against IPs is very common. It was not an encouraging combination.



Mary Joy Baylon in her current work.

Pantawid Pamilya operates to improve health and education outcomes for poor children and to bridge marginalized people, including the IPs, to livelihood and education opportunities so they will be empowered in making a better future for themselves. To date, Pantawid Pamilya serves 661,982 IP households.

Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) and Expanded Students Grants-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation (ESGP-PA) are two of the programs that help Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries have a better chance of getting out of poverty.

Mary Joy was able to find a job as a security guard after attending a capacity building and training program conducted by SLP. It may be a small-time job for many, but for Mary Joy and her family, it was a break they needed to support their everyday needs.

Early this year, Juda graduated from college, thanks to the assistance from ESGP-PA, a college education program for Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries implemented by the Commission on Higher Education, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Budget and Management, and Department of Labor and Employment, and Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges.

Despite the judgments from other people and the challenges brought about by poverty, Juda persevered to finish her journey to finally getting a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She used the insults and the discriminations as motivations to pursue her dream of becoming a teacher.

She shared, "Ito ang mga naging motivation ko para ituloy ang pag-aaral para maging guro."

Empowering PWDs

The physical limitations caused by his disability limited Joshua Geno Cruz's capacity to do what other high school kids usually enjoy. He could not run and play outside or participate in extracurricular activities that are physically demanding for him. He has a cleft palate and hand and leg deformities. Who would have the confidence and drive going to school every day with a condition like Joshua's?

But Joshua is an optimistic student and does not allow negativities deter him from giving his best despite his disability.

"Noong bata pa ako, siyempre hindi naman po maiiwasan iyong makarinig ng panunukso ng mga kaklase mo at ng mga ibang tao. Pero kailangang lumaban eh," he said during an interview for a Manila Bulletin article written by Bb. Pilipinas-Universe Catriona Gray.

The interview took place during the Araw ng Pagkilala 2018 where the hard work and perseverance of 200,000 Pantawid Pamilya



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senior high school graduates and 30,000 ESGP-PA grantees were recognized. Joshua was one of student beneficiaries who graduated from senior high school last academic year.

Pantawid Pamilya ensures that all child-beneficiaries, PWDs included, are given a fair chance to go to school and be empowered by education. Their education grants can be used as baon, transportation allowance, and means to make school projects. Students from poor households always worry about these things, and Pantawid Pamilya aims to address these through giving compliant students cash provisions: Php 300 per month for an elementary student and Php 500 per month for a high school student.

Pantawid Pamilya envisions a country that can provide education to the poor. It is designed to alleviate the problems of student-beneficiaries caused by poverty and to bridge to education, a weapon they can use to improve their living condition and make students like Joshua be confident that change is possible for PWDs.



“Noong bata pa ako, siyempre hindi naman po maiiwasan iyong makarinig ng panunukso ng mga kaklase mo at ng mga ibang tao. Pero kailangang lumaban eh”

- Joshua Geno Cruz



Pantawid Pamilya women making waves



Women from poor households do not always get opportunities for higher education, good employment, and other things that are important to help them combat the poverty cycle in their own families. It seems that many do not regard women as important drivers of development.

But social protection programs like Pantawid Pamilya aim to stop this discrimination through opening doors to community participation, leadership opportunities, and personal growth for its women beneficiaries. It believes that women can become leaders and excel in different fields despite poverty.

Eighty-seven percent of program grantees are female (data as of September 2018), and attendees of the Family Development Sessions (FDS) or members of Pantawid Pamilya parent groups are mostly women. Pantawid Pamilya contributes in unleashing their potentials through linking them to services, activities, and programs where they can learn and improve their own abilities so they could shape the future they have always envisioned.

Women as community leaders

Norma Somodio is the fifth among the 12 children of her parents. She was born and raised in Sitio Dyandang,

Brgy. Conrazon, Bunsud, Oriental Mindoro. Her family belongs to the Tadyawan Mangyan tribe. She did not acquire any formal education so she grew up knowing mainly two things: taking care of her siblings and attending to their farm. She wanted to go to school but to her parents, a diploma is of no use in doing household and farming chores. And like many girls in her tribe, she married at a young age.

But Norma does not allow her past to define her. The mother of three availed of the non-formal education offered by the different organizations that visited their community. She learned to read and write, and these skills have helped her a lot in doing tasks that a “no-read, no-write” would not be able to accomplish.

Norma is now married and her family is a Pantawid Pamilya beneficiary. The cash grants they regularly receive have been a great help since they live in a community with very limited economic opportunities.

Pantawid Pamilya also opened doors to personal growth and community service for Norma. She became a parent leader who helps in program implementation in the grassroots. She was trained how to lead her parent group and mobilize members for FDS and other Pantawid Pamilya activities. For the first time in her life, Norma felt a sense of purpose in helping the indigenous peoples in their community.

In 2017, Norma became the winner of the first Regional Search for Ulirang Parent Leader of Pantawid Pamilya MIMAROPA. She was recognized for her contribution in translating FDS modules to their ethnic dialect for the convenience of those who are not fluent in Tagalog.

With the civil society organization iHelp Inc., Norma leads FDS discussions. She also assists parents in registering their children in the Municipal Civil Registrar and promotes personal hygiene and cleanliness in her community.

Norma does these and so much more. She refers cases of violence against women (VAW) to concerned agencies. She volunteers to community works such as the construction of a building



in Dyandang Elementary School. She gives pieces of advice on just about anything to her co-beneficiaries. She is a confidant.

From being a housewife, she gradually became an inspiration to the IPs in and out of her tribe and her co-beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilya.

But why does she do all these pursuits? Her selfless answer:

“Nakita ko yung mga problema sa komunidad namin kaya ginusto kong tulungan yung mga kapwa ko IP.”

Evangeline “Baging” Nalam of Sta. Catalina, Negros Oriental had the same passion for helping her community. She is a Pantawid Pamilya parent leader and an active member of different community groups, like Kababayin-an Buhata Federation and Cawitan Fisherfolks Farmers Association.

The 59-year old mother knows that she also needs to enhance her abilities to be a change agent that is why she voluntarily attends different training seminars and workshops of Pantawid Pamilya, non-government organizations, and local government units. She learned about mediation and how to deal with conflicts, reproductive health, gender and development, VAWC, and responsible parenting, among others.



Baging also enjoys learning from FDS and sharing her knowledge on family and community development to her neighbors and friends who come to her for advice or help.

She does volunteer work as well. She joined the Philippine National Police's advocacy on gender sensitivity and Kalahi-CIDSS' (Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan - Comprehensive Integrated Delivery of Social Services) road repair project.



ne “Baging” Nalam and family

How does she balance doing all these community works, managing her household, and working as a food vendor and a seamstress?

She said she has a family that enables her to do both. Her four kids, who are, thankfully, not pasaway help her accomplish things around the house so she could pursue her advocacies and passions. She feels blessed that they grew up kind and helpful despite

not having a father. Her husband died more than a decade ago, and overcoming the hardships of being a solo parent was another accomplishment she has achieved.

Her dedication to her family and community was recognized during the National Search for Huwarang Pantawid Pamilya 2017 where they won first prize. The search awards exemplary family-beneficiaries who maintain strong family ties, demonstrate positive Filipino values, and create a positive impact in their community. Her family’s togetherness and sense of unity greatly helped in making the most of the assistance they get from Pantawid Pamilya.

“Simula noong mawalan ako ng asawa hindi ako nag-isip kung ano ang wala kami. Nag-focus ako para magkaroon kami ng unity sa pamilya,” said Baging.

Interacting with other Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries as parent leaders and paying attention to their surroundings inspired Norma and Baging to do something for their communities. The program became an instrument in empowering them to create the change they dreamed of.

Second chance at education

Many solo parents experience judgments from people who do not have compassion with their struggles in balancing work, family life, and personal aspirations. Rigie May Marbella and Jaysan dela Cruz, Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries, were not exempted from prejudices.

There were people who questioned Rigie May's ability to finish school with a baby in tow. It just was not possible for her, they thought. She was poor, unemployed, and unmarried.

But the 23-year old learned not to care even though other people's judgments hurt her and her parents. She focused on studying, determined to finish her elementary education course at Bicol State University and make her parents proud.

"Nagpapasalamat sa magulang ko ng sobra sa pagtanggap nila sa akin at sa pagsuporta sa kabila ng lahat. Sila ang naging sandigan ko. Tinulungan nila ako sa pag-aalaga sa anak ko tuwing kailangan kong iwan siya upang bumalik sa paaralan," said Rigie May.

Jaysan, 26, also suffered the same fate, but aside from people's criticisms and the struggles of making ends meet for her family she was hurt by her broken relationship with the father of her two kids. These greatly affected her confidence and drive to finish her Mathematics and Science Elementary Education course at the Philippine Normal University Agusan Campus.



"I have heard a lot of criticisms from people just because I got pregnant at an early age. There were times when I looked back in the life I had before, and I felt I wanted to go back to that point of my life," she tearfully shared.

But the hard work and perseverance of Rigie May and Jaysan changed their bitter past. With the assistance from Pantawid Pamilya and Expanded Student Grant-in-Aid Program for Poverty Alleviation (ESGP-PA), they got another chance at life.

ESGP-PA is a college education program for beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilya. From 2012 to 2018, it provided the grantees with opportunity to get a college education and increase their chance to get better employment

in the future. It was a program implemented by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). It aimed to help the grantees uplift their living condition and become contributors to national development.


Through Pantawid Pamilya and ESGP-PA, the two graduates were able to exceed the expectations from women from poor households who usually stay at home to take care of their children and family. Rigie May received honorific academic awards, while Jaysan graduated magna cum laude.

On May 2018, Rigie May and Jaysan were two of the students who were recognized during the Araw ng Pagkilala, a gathering of Pantawid Pamilya ESGP-PA grantees and senior high school graduates from different parts of the Philippines. The event was a recognition ceremony and venue for sharing experiences and stories of the journey of Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries. The participants were introduced to CHED's UniFAST (Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education); DOLE and TESDA's trainings and employment opportunities; and a career orientation from More Than Jobs PH.

With a college diploma, the two mothers found redemption as they move forward to provide a better future for their children. But even without the accolades from their respective universities, they already proved that women, even from poor households, have great potentials just waiting to be nourished by proper interventions and opportunities.



Collective action towards food security and sustainability



In Sitio Canturoy, a far-flung site in Brgy. Manoot, Rizal, Occidental Mindoro, a communal garden called Canturoy Community Garden grows at least 16 kinds of vegetables, like squash, eggplant, malunggay, pechay, sitaw, okra, and patola, plus root crops such as singkamas and gabi. It is maintained by five Pantawid Pamilya parent groups from Sitio Amaling II, Sitio Lower Canturoy, and Sitio Upper Canturoy. The moment they decided to establish the communal garden they had no idea it would change their lives and those of non-Pantawid Pamilya residents in the area.

The parent groups are able to address the health and nutrition needs of their families in a sustainable way. They delegate gardening tasks, attend farming seminars, and get seeds from Municipal Agriculture Office and their own home gardens. They created a scheme to manage the communal garden they envisioned to establish back in 2016. They plant, harvest, and eat healthy, and they plan to make this part of their lifestyle.

The same sense of unity and employing collective action that made the communal garden possible were also demonstrated as the parent groups solved a major problem in maintaining the communal garden. They did not have a water system near the Canturoy Community Garden. Through their cooperation and creativity, the parent groups launched the MaBoteng Pamayanan Project to collect and sell recyclable materials like empty bottles, tin cans, and newspapers. The money they earned from this project and selling some of their produce was used in buying construction materials for the water system that has given them, and those who are not Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries living near the garden, so much convenience.



Canturoy Community Garden in Brgy. Manoot, Rizal, Occidental Mindoro

What started as a small idea borne out of attending Family Development Sessions (FDS) became a life-changing experience to Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries. The FDS lessons on Food and Nutrition and Bio-Intensive Gardening which promotes health, nutrition and food security and hunger mitigation inspired the beneficiaries to mobilize themselves and create communal gardens.

FDS is Pantawid Pamilya's unique feature that provides beneficiaries an opportunity for building collective action towards achieving a desired change. Other conditional cash transfer programs do not have this kind of venue used in educating beneficiaries on the importance of their participation in the success of the program. One activity that best illustrate this is the mobilization of beneficiaries to create communal gardens to prevent malnutrition and food insecurity.

Another inspiring story is the collective action of beneficiaries of Brgy. Calzada, Guinobatan, Albay to help feed 542 families who were temporarily housed in Guinobatan West Central School due to the Mayon Volcano eruption last April. The parent groups were evacuees as well but they thought of a project that would also benefit other people.

The money they spent for the meals came from the earnings of selling vegetables and root crops from the communal garden and a portion of the group's winnings from a family-based food production competition that the Provincial Government of Albay organized.

The group saw the need of the displaced families for nutritious food and selflessly helped in addressing it through the feeding activity. It was a kind gesture that the evacuees will never forget.

"Salamat, naisip ninda na magtabang man samo. Masiramon su pagkakan mi ta fresh su gulay, tapos dakol sahog (We are grateful that they thought of helping us. The food was delicious because the vegetables are fresh and it has a lot of ingredients)," said 37-year old Ginna Basquillos, who evacuated her house in Brgy. Masarawag together with her two kids and her mother.

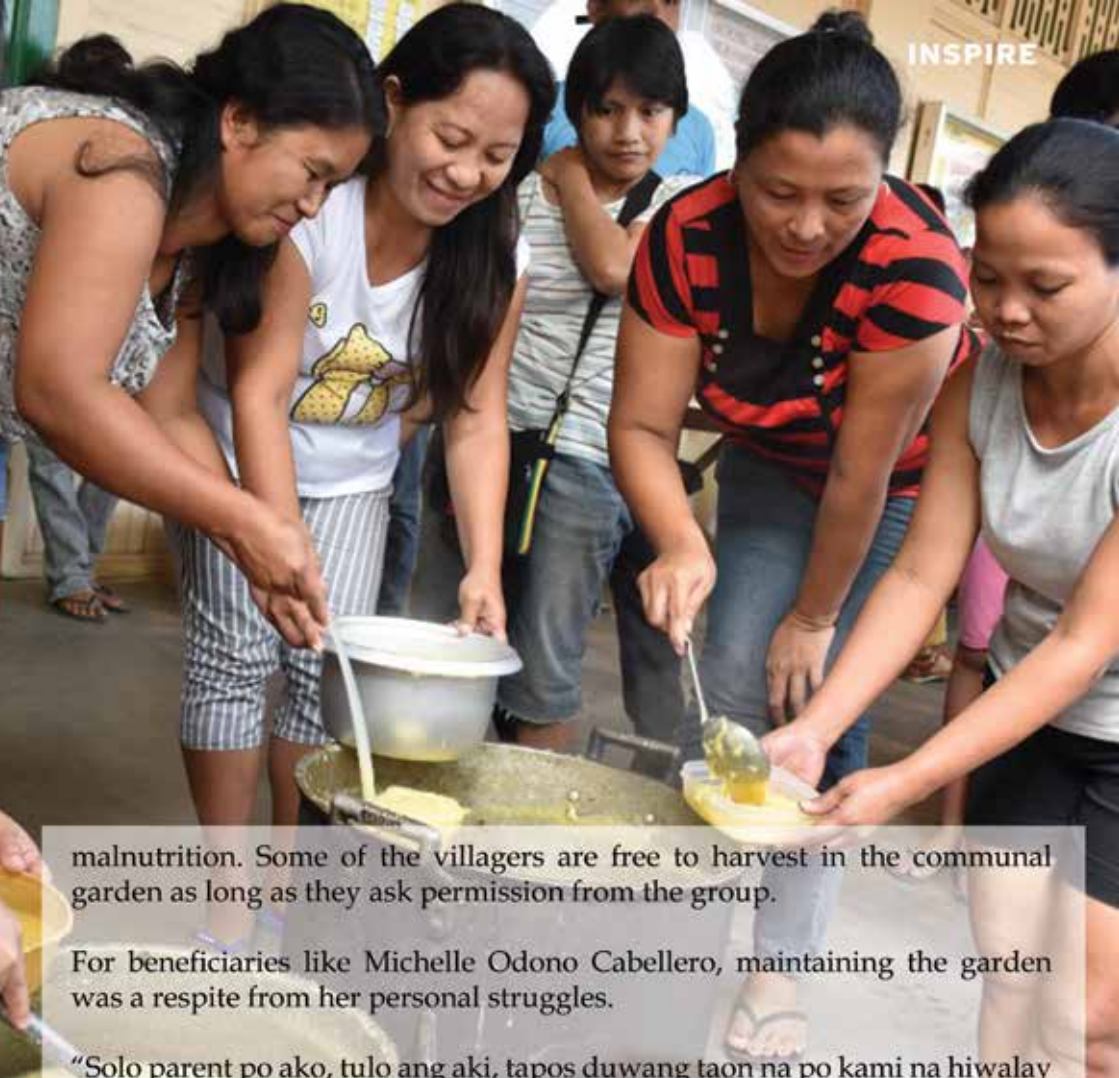
The parent groups were proud to share that their communal garden in Brgy. Calzada has impressive harvest consisting of 30 plant varieties including sitaw, pechay, mustasa, talong, kamatis, okra, luya, carrots, labanos, kamote, saging, kalunggay, patola, and kangkong. Root crops and herbs are abound, and there are times that the beneficiaries get to harvest fruits, like papaya, banana, and watermelon.

The feeding activity in the evacuation center was the beneficiaries' act of paying forward the help that they get from different groups to make putting up their communal garden possible. The barangay council, women's organization, farmers' association, Bicol University College of Agriculture and Forestry, and Department of Agriculture provide them with seedlings to plant, farming tools, and training on land cultivation, planting, and producing organic fertilizers.



Feeding activity in the evacuation center by the Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries

But even before the Mayon Volcano started spewing ashes and smoke and burned some of their plants, the parent groups have always been helping their community. They give some of the produce to the Child Care Center so that the students there will eat healthy and combat



malnutrition. Some of the villagers are free to harvest in the communal garden as long as they ask permission from the group.

For beneficiaries like Michelle Odonon Cabellero, maintaining the garden was a respite from her personal struggles.

“Solo parent po ako, tulo ang aki, tapos duwang taon na po kami na hiwalay nin agom ko. Playboy, kaya sa pagtanom po nakagaan po nin boot (I am a solo parent with three children. I’ve been separated from my husband for two years now. Gardening helps ease my stress),” she explained.

The Pantawid Pamilya communal gardens have not only become a sustainable source of food for but also a source of stories of collective action, friendship, generosity, cooperation, and even self-care, especially to those who find gardening relaxing and comforting.

More stories of change through establishing the communal gardens are featured on Pantawid Pamilya Gulayan sa Baranagay’s Facebook page (www.facebook.com/4psgulayansabrgy).



PAMILYANG PILIPINO

NAGSUSUMIKAP. NAGTUTULUNGAN. NAGTATAGUMPAY.

The National Search for Huwarang Pantawid Pamilya

The National Search for Huwarang Pantawid Pamilya has been one of the venues of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in communicating the positive changes in the lives of the beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program. Since 2012, the search has been recognizing family-beneficiaries who maintain strong family ties, demonstrate positive Filipino values, and create a positive impact in their respective communities.

For 2018, the search carried the theme “Pamilyang Pilipino: Nagsusumikap. Nagtutulungan. Nagtatagumpay.” This highlights the message that the hard work of the family-beneficiaries, complemented by the assistance from Pantawid Pamilya and DSWD, produces positive results that are manifested in the stories of the huwaran families.

The Dionisio family, from the Kabihug tribe of Labo, Camarines Norte, emerged as the grand winner of the search. They stood out with their mission to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples (IPs), end the discriminations against them, and prove to the world that IPs like them can become successful, too.



"Bilang mga benepisyaryo ng Pantawid Pamilya, priority natin (dapat) ang education. Maayo sa kulay, maayo sa buhok, maayo sa katauhan ung sa tao. Kung gusto niyo talagang maging successful, go and go lang po. Go nang go!," said Marites Dionisio, an Alternative Learning System volunteer, as she encouraged the family-beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilya to improve themselves amid the challenges that come with being poor.

Marites' husband, Wenceslao, is a tribal assistant for the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples and together they instill to their children and Kabihug tribesmen the importance of education in the development of IPs.

The family wanted to change the way people treat them that is why they strive to go to school. Despite the struggles they experience due to poverty, Marites took up BS education and her husband Wency attended college for three years. Their three children and nephew also do well in school and are active in extracurricular activities even though they also experience being bullied by their classmates.

"Kapag sinabing 'kabihug', walang alam. Kaya ang misyon po namin ay matulungan sila na mga ka-tribo namin at maeducate rin sila," Marites explained.

The Dionisio family received P30,000 and a plaque during the search awarding on the Pantawid Pamilya National Family Day.

How the huwaran families are chosen

All the DSWD regional offices are required to conduct a regional search. The regional winners then compete to the national level of the search, which has two phases: desk validation and field validation.

During the desk validation, the judges rate the regional winners based on the documentations submitted by the DSWD regional offices. The five families who get the highest rating are the finalists of the national search.

The second phase of the national search is the field validation wherein the judges visit the finalists in their house to interview them and their neighbors, community leaders, co-beneficiaries and partner implementers of the program, like teachers and health workers. The interview and interaction with the families and their community members help the judges validate the information in the documentations submitted by the regional offices. The judges then convene to rate the finalists and identify the grand winner of the search.



The awarding of the families is conducted on the Pantawid Pamilya National Family Day celebration. They are given cash prizes, plaques, and gift packs from the program's partners. The huwaran families serve as ambassadors of the program and resource persons in Family Development Session and Pantawid Pamilya-led activities where the families can share their knowledge and experiences on their advocacies.

Here are the other finalists of the search in 2018 whose stories are filled with values, lessons, family togetherness, and determination to improve their lives:



Bonite family (Roxas City, Capiz)

"Ang pamilya nga upod mangamuyo, amo ang pamilya nga nagapabilin asta sa katubtuban (The family that prays together, stays forever)."

This is the motto that family Bonite lives by. Sherlyn, Eugene, and their nine children believe that family is the greatest gift from God. Despite the challenges brought about by having a big family, the Bonite family of Roxas City, Capiz manages to work together to improve their living condition. The older children were sent to school amid problems in their education expenses. They now help their parents send their younger siblings to school and meet their daily needs.

The family also serves as a role model, a motivator, and an inspiration in their barangay. Sherlyn is very active in community activities and Eugene is a dependable father and neighbor always willing to lend a helping hand. Together, they shared their knowledge on catfish culture to their neighbors so they could get a seed capital from the DSWD's Sustainable Livelihood Program. Their project was recognized in their city and province.

Sherlyn has heard stereotypes about big families, like neglecting the education of the children. But for her family, their love and respect for each other have helped them solve problems that had come their way.

She said, *"Kahit mahirap lamang kami sama-sama naming nireresolba ang bawat problema na dumating sa buhay namin lalo na sa pinasyal na aspeto."*



Campugan family (Cordova, Cebu)

The can-do attitude and willingness to share their talent have made the Campugan family quite famous in their community. The Campugan siblings have been joining contests such as quiz bowls, declamations, song and dance, beauty pageants, and sports competitions since they were kids. Their mother Ofelia is very good at singing and is always invited to perform in different gatherings in their barangay.

But aside from showing the talents and skills, the Campugan family of Cordova, Cebu is also known for their untiring community participation. Clodualdo, their father, is a member of the Empowerment and Reaffirmation of Paternal Abilities and Ofelia is an active member of the Cordova Women's Association, Ugnayan ng Barangay at Simbahan and the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council and an assistant bookkeeper in their Kalahi-CIDSS sub-project implementation. The Campugan children participate in activities of Singles for Christ, Parish Youth Coordinating Council, Sangguniang Kabataan, and other community-building initiatives. The family also advocates against cyber pornography, which has been a problem in Cordova.

Amid Ofelia's battle against breast cancer, the family's neighbors and friends laud them from being steadfast, resilient, and ready to help anyone who calls on them.

"Helping is not all about money; it is about selflessly giving your time and listening to them as they share their problems," Ofelia says in dialect.



Maraña family (Sta. Maria, Laguna)

The Maraña family of Sta. Maria, Laguna is labeled by their neighbors as a family who is always on-call. Even before Tatay Derek became a barangay councilor, the family has already been a go-to household in the barangay for seeking assistance, especially for driving patients to the hospital. Their heart to help the community is beyond Tatay Derek's call as a public servant in the barangay.

"Minsan, kailangan ko ring dumiskarte ng pera kahit walang wala kami. Kasi kapag may magpapadala sa ospital, kailangang kahit papaano ay meron ako para kung sakaling wala silang pambili ng pagkain o pang-gas, kaya ko nang sagutin," shared Tatay Derek Maraña.

Education is also one of the most important things for the Maraña family. The two youngest daughters of Tatay Derek excel academically, while the eldest Christine is now a teacher. The children appreciate all the hard work of their parents to be able to give what they need in school.

Christine said, *"Habang lumalaki po kami, hindi nabibigay nina Inay at Itay ang lahat ng gusto namin. Hindi kami katulad ng ibang bata. Pero puwede kong ipagmalaki na pagdating sa pag-aaral, gumagawa at gumagawa sila ng paraan."*

The family received the AlaGAD (Affirmative and Laudable Advocacies on Gender and Development) ng Pagbabago Award for championing better gender relations in their home.



Ramos family (Urbiztondo, Pangasinan)

From Urbiztondo, Pangasinan, the Ramos family is known in their community for their active participation in various barangay projects and their own feeding program. They may not be well-off but they are able to feed poor children in their barangay to combat malnutrition. They collect and sell recyclable materials to earn money that they can use in sustaining their twice-a-month feeding program. They got the Most Innovative Family Award during the Family Day for this project.

"Adhikain po kasi namin na makatulong sa aming barangay na bawasan ang kaso ng malnutrisyon. Tag-hirap po kasi ngayon sa amin. Isang-kahig, isang-tuka ang karamahin dito," said Chris, father to three daughters.

The family is also an advocate of caring for children with special needs as their second daughter has Down syndrome.

"Hindi po namin siya ikinahihiya at hindi naming itinuturing na pabigat. Ipinagmamalaki po namin siya," said Jhing. She also shared that the lessons in Family Development Sessions taught them to care for special children and promote their rights.