

Center for People’s Resources and Services, Inc.

Vision

CPRS envisions itself as a catalyst for change and among the prime movers in the advancement of the care of Mother Earth and balanced ecology now increasingly threatened by global warming and climate change

Mission

Lay the foundation for the capability building of communities to respond effectively in times of calamities through adaptation and mitigation measures that will minimize if not totally avoid their vulnerabilities to calamities

Goals

Develop the capacity of CPRS to efficiently and effectively assist the communities to prepare and act decisively during disaster situations and in the timely provision of relief and rehabilitation assistance to calamity victims.

Motivate the people to act in the protection, rehabilitation and conservation of the environment as a decisive factor in addressing the catastrophic threats to humanity of the intensifying global warming and climate change whose destructions are increasingly becoming a day-to-day phenomenon world-wide.

Establish a broad front of environmentalist with a concerted program of action being implemented in the care of Mother Earth and in confronting the devastations posed by global warming and climate change.



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The

NEWSLETTER

Enhancing People’s Capacity to Cope with Disasters



CPRS staff together with BSRFFWA beneficiaries during the livelihood assistance distribution

CPRS distributes livelihood assistance

The Center for People’s Resources and Services, Inc. (CPRS) headed by the Executive Director Manuel B. Felipe distributed the livelihood assistance to the typhoon Yolanda victims in Brgy. Sta. Rosa Farmers and Farm Workers Association (BSRFFWA) of Murcia, Negros Occidental.

The Executive Director together with the Field Staff Dolly Celedonio implemented farm tools with 5 sets of sprayer, spade, hoes, bolos and shovel to the designated production committees and beneficiaries of five haciendas of BSRFFWA including Ana Regalado Benedicto (ARB), Cuison, Ilimnan, Perez and Ylanan.

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Action Medeor visits BSRFFWA

Action Medeor Project Officer Katharina Wilkin and colleague Luise Krumm together with the Center for People’s Resources and Services, Inc. (CPRS) staff conducted the evaluation and monitoring on the respective communities of Brgy. Sta. Rosa Farmers and Farm Workers Association (BSRFFWA) last October 24-25, 2015.

Evaluators coordinated the sequence of visitation from Hacienda Ylanan for 1<sup>st</sup> day down to haciendas of Ana Regalado Benedicto (ARB), Cuison and Perez for last day.

Hacienda Ylanan officers and beneficiaries prepared a welcome program through cultural presentation of “Teatro Bungkal”, BSRFFWA

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Sus-Ag Training conducted

The Center for People’s Resources and Services, Inc. (CPRS) in collaboration with Negros Rurban Advancement Programme for Socio-Economic Development, Inc. (NRAPSED) conducted the Sustainable Agriculture (Sus-Ag) Training intended for the livelihood development of Brgy. Sta. Rosa Farmers and Farm Workers Association (BSRFFWA) beneficiaries.

Four participants in every hacienda of Ana Regalado Benedicto (ARB), Cuison, Ilimnan, Perez and Ylanan took part on Farm Planning, Soil Management and Agro Forestry tackled by NRAPSED Executive Director Emilindo Belnas.

Mr. Belnas supervised the orientation on the said topics and instructed the participants to make farm plans and produce organic inputs using fermented solutions to be applied for the soil fertility enhancement of their identified demo farms.

“In order for their livelihood to be sustainable, BSRFFWA needed to convert sugar plantation

into corn, rice and vegetable farms and start using organic inputs not just to secure the safety of the food they eat but also to help soil to renew nutrients caused by the long-time use of harmful chemicals.” Susie Tapi-on, CPRS Project Coordinator said regarding the objective of the training.

BSRFFWA Chairman Danilo Tabura said that the use organic was more effective than using chemicals because it increases the plant productivity proved by some project areas like Hacienda Perez and it also ensures better health benefits.

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youth cultural group before they proceed to the consultation of corn and vegetable farm.


The following day, Action Medeor Project Officer checked the safe storage facility and handled a dialog with the farmer-beneficiaries of ARB where they stated their problems including farming needs especially during dry season and the intervention of private goons in the farm they cultivated.

Hacienda Cuison then presented their pig pens and let the visitors see their rice field, followed by the evaluation of vegetable garden managed by Edna Britanico and Ligaya Britanico of Hacienda Perez.

“As a result, the Action Medeor saw that the project was well implemented and the beneficiaries were dynamic in their tasks and responsibilities.” CPRS Executive Director Manuel Felipe said.

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Bitok grabbed the opportunity to bring back what was lost.

They made use of farm implements into their community-managed farm. Later on, they harvested an average yield which they spent for the processing of documents on DAR office until they claimed CLOA.

“May duta na may pangabuhian pa kami” Bitok stating how the said Non-Government Organization (NGO) helped them claim their rights. Residents of hacienda ARB submitted the Petition for Coverage last 2012 and through their collective efforts received a Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) last December 2014 from DAR- Murcia. CLOA serves as an agreement between the government and the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries that they have to make the land productive and pay an equivalent amortization.

Hoping they can still regain their yields and repossess their leased land. Bitok found his way on how to recover from the saddening effect of Yolanda. He took risk of spending a capital of Php 2,000.00 for palay and string beans seeds and farm inputs to secure the production of their farm. After three months, they raised Php 20, 000.00 from their planted string beans which they harvested every three days, 10 times per month. They delivered their product to the Libertad Central Market at Bacolod City where they had an established “suki” or vendor.

After his fellow BSRFFWA members witnessed his development, they decided to plant crops like palay, corn, peanuts and vegetable seeds to have a sustainable farm. They were resolved that they have to conduct community farming to help every single member enhanced the ability to make a living. Bitok also enrolled on a training under the Department of Agriculture which according to him can increase his skills on dealing with rice production.

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## Bringing Back What Was Lost

*Who said that farmers are lazy?  
That they are hopeless... living without  
dreams and working without envisioning  
a brighter future for their descendants?*

A 28-yr old Rogelio "Bitok" Navales, having a wife named Rodessa Navales and a child residing at Purok Bahay, Brgy. Sta. Rosa, Murcia, Negros Occidental proves us all wrong.

They were members of Brgy. Sta. Rosa Farmers and Farm Workers Association shortly known as BSRFFWA. His parents only own 30 acres of farm lots as source of living. He just finished 5<sup>th</sup> grade that's why he didn't attempt to apply at any establishments or companies.

Thinking how he can sustain a living for his family and prepare a future for his child made him join the community cultivation.

They positioned a cultivation on the hacienda owned by Anamarie Regalado Benedicto (ARB). This action was taken to call the attention of authorities to distribute the land as stated on Republic Act (RA) 6657 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) of the Philippine government implemented by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) during the Corazon Cojuangco- Aquino Regime last 1988.

They realized that the government didn't give them land to own but a state's property to be paid through mortgage. The bogus platforms of CARP which later on turned to the formation of RA 9700 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program with Extension Reform (CARPER) year

2009. According to the beneficiaries of hacienda ARB, it appears to be different in terms but with the same concept and references. Still land distribution for the farmers and farm workers in front but the gain of profit and income for the government. Genuine Agrarian Reform is still a dream, an unreachable figment for all landless laborers of the said hacienda.

Fighting the right to land ownership is like a struggle between life and death. A life to sustain livelihood for their family's needs and death after several threats from the land owners. Nights seems to be an agony of an ill watching over safety from the intervention of private goons roaming around their houses and the land they're cultivating.

The land owner was unresolved that the residents of Sitio Bahay positioned for land cultivation which serves as a cue of charging them Forcible Entry and Usurpation of Real Rights and Property. After several hearings, the case was dismissed. DAR, farmers and Atty. Miguel Regalado- Benedicto, an inheritor of Ana Regalado-Benedicto set an agreement that they have to pull out from the land they took over and Atty. Benedicto will designate a portion of vacant lot for them to cultivate.

Because of the agreement set by DAR between the owner and the beneficiaries, Bitok was awarded a land of equivalent 1.4 hectares as individual managed. Their community under BSRFFWA acquired 0.6 hectare of land which they resorted to plant crops like cassava, sweet potato, banana and others to be their source of food for dead season or locally known as "tiempo muerto". But unfortunately, their livelihood was damaged during the Typhoon Yolanda. Their future yields compromised their expectation of gaining food for a

## Feature Story

## Hunger speaks a Chance



hours of work a day from dawn to nightfall. Slaves of daylight punished under the sweltering heat of the sun and the coldness soaked during the rain, suffering unjust working condition just to augment a meager for food and school expenses for their children.

The real quest is that *'until when should they remain as slaves of their own land?'* The thought that both feet were anchoring on the land of their forefathers gave them strength. The land they never owned even a strip which they feed through their vigor, drench by squeezing their eyes and pores. Property they sustain by free labor force offered only for the benefit of the greedy heirs.

As a mother, Nanay Edna won't let the ties of land bondage continue to tag them as slaves of land lords. The desire of giving a beaming future for their inheritors, led them to struggle for land ownership. For them, to claim for a portion is not illegal since their late ancestors were the long-time farm workers of Hacienda Perez who was buried deep under the forgotten promises of the land owner.

With the cooperation of the residents occupying hacienda Perez, they demanded an amount of separation fee in exchange of land ownership from the lessee. It seems they were abandoned by the person who supposed to give all the benefits to those who took care of the land from preparation to cultivation process. The power of the heir built up the wall of feudal lords against people's surge through the manipulation of land administrator.

Darkness calls for the morning stars to fade. Sun's rays waving already through the eastern mountain peaks. Warm smokes of the cooked rice rages towards the nipa hut while Nanay Edna is doing her early morning routine of preparing breakfast before going to work. She packed everything needed for a long walk over the farm of Hacienda Perez.

A 46-year old mother with her husband Tatay Nato, were striving hard to sustain a living for their children. She worked during the seasons of planting, weeding and applying fertilizer into the sugar plantation while Tatay Nato as *Tapsero* doing a backbreaking cutting and hauling of matured sugar canes. Inside the hacienda of sugar plantation, they were the *obreros* whose working slave-like receiving unfavorable wage under *pakyaw* system.

They experienced more than eight



They conducted a community cultivation through planting root crops into the land of Perez’ clans as primary action to survive from famine. They till to give their descendants food to eat, also to call for an answer from the land owner regarding their demands. They submitted a petition of land coverage to the Department of Agrarian Reform simply known as DAR. The said department as implementer of the government’s agrarian reform programs were expected to take primary actions to distribute the land to deserving beneficiaries. A request from the dwellers of hacienda still remains a Notice of Coverage (NOC). Until this time, they were still waiting for the Certificate of Land Ownership or CLOA.

Their community managed farm didn’t exempt the violent attack of Typhoon Yolanda. It was not easy to face both hazards at the same time. The fear of harassment from the private goons of the land owner and the thought that hunger might frail their children. Insufficiency in everything is the strongest disaster faced by any other family like Nanay Edna’s.

When Center for People’s Resources and Services, Inc. or the CPRS came, their community were very much thankful for the extended help they received. “Abi ko wala na gid kami chansa nga makabangon mo!” Nanay Edna said wagging her head back and forth.

Great responses from Action Medeor who most of all provided assistance for the fast recovery of Yolanda victims through the help of CPRS as local Non-Government Organization (NGO). “Ang gin-hatag sa amon nga binhi, ginhalungan ko gid kay kabalo ko nga kung may itanom ko may ipakaon gid ko sa mga bata ko.” Nanay Edna said with a glance of hope on her face.

As most parents statement I’ve heard, looking their children cry for hunger is a hundred times more painful than seeing their house being damaged. Their whole community made use of the livelihood assistance as assorted seeds, livestock and farming tools to cultivate their managed farm. Creating resources for the incoming strike of dead season or locally known as “tiempo muerto” made them work hard.

Not so long, the land administrator Virgelio Regalado manned with goons answered them by destruction of farm with tractor tramping their planted crops. Watching their resources being destroyed made every parents and children curse them to hell. The dilemma of giving birth to the parcel or to cause a death on every single person fighting for the land title gave them reservations.



Just to provide for food, Nanay Edna decided to develop a farm beside the river. Together with Tatay Nato and 5 elders they removed weeds and shrubs to make use of the remaining land along the hill. Taking a month to clear up the trash of demolished weeds, they patiently cultivated the unstable portion of land. “Diri ko gintanom ang ginhimos ko nga binhi halin sa bunga sang produkto sang amon community-managed farm”. Nanay Edna proudly introduced their obtained farm where in good hands became their source of income to continuously send their children to school and provide for their daily consumption.

“Ang natun-an ko nga training sa paghimo sang fermented solution gin aplikar ko sa amon uma.” Nanay Edna added that there’s no need to spend more money for chemicals when you know how to make some alternatives. According to her, “wala pulos ang natun-an ko kung indi ko pag-gamiton.” Resourcefulness of Nanay Edna

brought up hope to her fellow typhoon victims that there’s still a chance behind adversity.

Nanay Edna and Tatay Nato noticed a great difference between their situation before and after the yolanda came. Passing through ravages both by natural and man-made hazards. Hand-to-mouth workers like them learned from their experiences. Beside of sharing it with neighborhoods, they have the assurance that they are eating safe food from their backyards. “Duta, binhi kag kapisan lang”, Nanay Edna’s answer when she was asked about her view of sustaining a life being a mother aiming for hope and clear tomorrow for her beloved.

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BSRFFWA made use of 100 sacks of rice given as immediate relief to enable beneficiaries practice community management of their farm through food for work where they received several kilos of it according to the number of hours they worked.

Mr. Felipe said that the livelihood assistance aimed to help or atleast raise the economic status of the most vulnerable survivors of the typhoon Yolanda to cope with the devastation.