



PNFSP Newsletter

VOL 4 NO 1 | JUNE 2011

INSIDE

Hunger rises with CCT ②

NW Evaluation ③

Editorial ④

Peace brings best educ for Lumads

■ BY FR. RAYMUND AMBRAY | ALCADDEV

Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development or ALCADDEV reaped 20 graduates last March 15, 2011 during its 4th graduation ceremony at the school campus in Sitio Han-ayan, Diatagon, Lianga, Surigao del Sur. The event was considered most special because the entire school year (2010-2011) proceeded without any interruption of war or threat of evacuation. Hence for the first time, ALCADDEV received a 100% passing rate for their students who took the Accreditation and Equivalency (A and E) test conducted by the Department of Education – a test to measure the capacity of these students of alternative education if it is at par with formal education.

With the theme “A food secured community, emblem to education of progressive quality”, the celebration was graced by no less than the First Secretary on Political Affairs of the Belgian Embassy, Mr. Jozef Naudts, whose government supported the technology to enhance the food security of the different communities comprising the MAPASU (Malahutayong Pakigbisog alang sa Sumunsunod) organization. Other visitors and supporters of the school came from the LGU's, NGO's (New World and Infants Du Mekong), PO's and the ecumenical Church personnel.

In his speech as the guest speaker, Mr. Naudts underlined the right to food as the basic human right and that it can also be a fundamental problem. He then reiterated the commitment of the Belgian government to constantly address this problem. Through the Belgian Development Cooperation, his government has financed the three-year food security project in the area that benefited primarily the parents of the students



and members of the organization through their Scientific Sustainable Agriculture (SSA) school program. Representing the graduates was Mr. Sarry Campos who thanked everyone who made the event more meaningful for them. He stressed the significance of the food security project for the progress it brought to their education and their communities.

Indeed, the event capped the success story of this alternative education which according to Sr. Helen Maquiling, MSM, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Alcadev, Inc., has, above all, enriched the capacity of the Lumads in tilling their own ancestral land and their capacity for self-determination.

Bioethanol plant to displace farmers in Isabela

Green Futures Innovations, Inc. (GFII), a joint venture between Japan's Corporation and JGC Corporation, together with the Philippine Bioethanol and Energy Investments Corporation and Taiwanese holding company GCO are planning to build a P6 billion bioethanol plant in San Mariano, Isabela which will be operational by March 2012.

According to GFII president Reynaldo P. Bantug, the plant will produce 54 million liters of bioethanol and generate 100,000 megawatt-hours of electricity annually.

However, the said bioethanol project will result in the displacement of farmers and

IPs, based on the National Fact Finding Mission (NFFM) conducted by Danggayon Dagiti Mannalon ti Isabela (DAGAMI), Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines (RMP). The FFM was carried out in San Mariano, Isabela last February 22-23. An International Fact Finding Mission (IFFM) was later organized by the People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS), Ibon International, Asian Peasant Coalition (APC), KMP and DAGAMI last May 30 to June 3 to confirm the findings of the earlier mission and to bring the issue to the global arena.

Of the 6,000 hectares planned for the nursery site, 2,200 hectares were already used which resulted to one thousand families being displaced in 8 baranggays of San Mariano. A total of 11,000 hectares are intended for the bioethanol project. They plan on making it the country's biggest producer of bioethanol.

Among the findings of the FFM were: widespread landgrabbing in areas intended for the sugarcane plantation, anomalous land titling, foreclosure by the Landbank of the Philippines on farmers' land and CLOA cancellation. Military presence has also been observed in places where there are strong opposition to the bioethanol project.

Contrary to what the proponents of the project say, the land intended for the project is not idle. They are productive lands planted

Hunger rises as CCT intensifies

■ BY JHANA TEJOME | PNFSP

The SWS survey on hunger and poverty rate increasing from November 2010 to April did not come as a surprise and was in fact expected. President Noynoy Aquino however, was startled by the news. In disbelief, he belied the survey results flaunting his administration's flagship program to counter hunger and poverty. The Conditional Cash Transfer or the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) which he followed suit from the previous Arroyo administration was and is bound to failure. Despite its intensification by the Aquino government, its impact is still insignificant.

And why won't it fail? No matter how the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), its implementing agency, sugar coat it as a "social contract" and an investment to "human capital", still giving cash without sustained availability and accessibility for its social needs is tantamount to a "dole-out". In the 4Ps scheme, "no sustainability will be attained".

In its program, a family receives P1,400 monthly or almost P15,000 annually. A family receives P500 a month for health and P300 for educational needs per child. It is rather unfortunate that most of the beneficiaries are unaware that what they receive monthly came from government loans from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). ADB approved in September last year a \$400M loan to support the expansion of CCT to accommodate 570,000 families. If they only knew that these loans are an added burden to them and the entire country, and which we all Filipinos pay in billions of pesos just for its interest.

In rural areas, where most farmers are hungry, what they cry for is "land to the tillers" and not CCT. Genuine agrarian reform should be implemented to sustain food security.

PNFSP Secretariat received reports, comments from the network members regarding the implementation of 4Ps in their particular areas:

Mendicacy vs Sustainability. Before the harvest season, people tend to find work in lean months, but as what has been observed, rural folks instead anticipate the amounts from the 4Ps payroll. Some use the 4Ps card as guarantee to borrow from sari-sari store or lending entities. Reports of increase in sales of liquors have also been monitored. Some beneficiaries tend to buy non-food and non-essentials. Oftentimes, the unequal amounts received by one family to the others have been a contentious issue among the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries suspect anomalies in the computation of their payroll, but nonetheless, they do not want to complain for reasons that they might be dropped from the list.

Preference for women. One parent leader, Arlene, from Masbate was interviewed by PNFSP. She expressed the difficult task as a parent leader. Women are given preference by the program since in the family they are considered as the budget manager, and the ones who take care of the children. She explained that as PL she is the one monitoring the weights of the children. Part of the conditions of 4Ps is that failure of a mother to increase the weight of a child would mean a deduction of the monthly allocation or worse, be dropped from the list. Oftentimes, she is being questioned by her members that she has something to do with reduced amounts. No matter how she explains to her members that she has no control of how it is computed, she feels that there is somehow a tinge of doubt among her peers. She came to know also of some PLs who use their position to get money from their members. They charge P100 per member just to ensure that they be

maintained in the list.

The scheme of dropping a family from the list because the mother cannot cope with the required increase in weight is definitely not pro-women. Failure to meet the conditions are not of their own making. Health and nutrition services are social needs that have long been neglected by the government.

Individuality vs Cooperativism. The 4Ps program focus on per family assistance. It is not geared towards promoting cooperation among members of the community. Once a family receives the amount for health and education, they are left on their own decisions on what to buy. Once they fail the conditions, no one bothers. Each has to take care of his/her own interests. This mindset is unhealthy, and fosters disunities among community members.

(HUNGER RISES) | PAGE 3

NW visits Cordi Strengthens North – South development cooperation and solidarity relations



It was not an easy travel for the delegation of the Province of East Flanders-New World, Belgium to reach the far-flung communities of the Cordillera but they made it successfully. Their commitment and sincerity in dealing with their partners in the South further strengthened the development cooperation and solidarity relations of the two.

The delegation of four from the Province of East Flanders, Belgium headed by Deputy Eddy Couckuyt- Deputy of Tourism, Youth and Welfare and Development Cooperation; and with him were Deputy Hilde Bruggeman- Deputy of Sports, Urban Development and Personnel; William Blondeel- Department Head for Development Cooperation; and Agnes Verspreet- Administrative Officer for the North and South Relations Office. With the delegation was Roger Camps- New World (Flemish NGO) country representative to the Philippines. They arrived in the Cordillera on January 29, 2011 to once again visit their CDPC - CPA partners in the Cordillera.

They visited projects, met with peoples organizations/beneficiaries and other development stakeholders, as well as with network partners. The commendable North – South Development Cooperation policy has been a program of the province of East Flanders for decades.

A solidarity program with the Center for Development Programs in the Cordillera and Cordillera Peoples' Alliance network and allies concluded the six days visit last February 4. The network and allies of CDPC-CPA expressed their solidarity with the Province of East Flanders-New World through dances, songs and speeches. The PEF -NW delegation also expressed their warm solidarity and their continuing support to the Cordillera peoples, in a speech delivered by Deputy Couckuyt, after their delegation solidarity song. According to him, the concrete results and impact of the partnership are seen in the lives of the community peoples and the stronger network of NGOs and POs.

Resource:

<http://www.cdpcckordilyera.org/>

(HUNGER RISES | FROM PAGE 2)

NGOs have been preaching communities to be self-reliant and self-sufficient. PNFSP strongly believes that cooperation among members of

ODA not the answer to food insecurity

■ BY SHARL LOPEZ | PNFSP

According to the People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS), Asian Peasant Coalition (APC), and the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects have exacerbated poverty, hunger and landlessness in the Philippines. This was the theme during the National Consultation on Agrarian Reform and Food Sovereignty last March 25, 2011 at St. Theresa's College.

communities is very important to make interventions continuous and sustaining, as opposed to merely handing out cash to the poor.

ODA projects serve as the mechanism for continued landgrabbing by foreign corporations and big landlords. They are also largely foreign debt and attached with policy conditionalities. ODA in agriculture promotes high-value crops, corporate plantations and corporate schemes. During the workshop, several solutions were mentioned including the passage of HB 3059 or the Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill, which aims for the free distribution of land to landless farmers. The government should also develop its research agenda on sustainable agriculture and appropriate technology.

PNFSP attends IP conference

■ BY JHANA TEJOME | PNFSP

"Careful what we wish for," is what Ms. Beverly Longid of Katribu partylist commented as she criticized the National Commission of Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) for its anti-IP policies. She delivered her speech during TFIP's (Task Force for Indigenous Peoples' Rights) 4th National Conference held at UP Diliman last April 4. The activity was participated by different IP groups from all over the country.

NCIP is a result of the different campaigns for the recognition of the rights of indigenous people but now its interests are in contrast with the IPs. Through it, more mining activities were given permits which largely displace the indigenous people living in the area.

PNFSP, represented by Ms. Jhana Tejome, agreed with Ms. Longid's recommendation for progressive groups to improve the documentation on HR violations of IPs whether these are committed to individuals or among communities. PNFSP suggested further to give approximate amounts to damages of food crops when mining exploits agricultural lands. There is increasing hunger and poverty rate in the Philippines, thus with the decline in our food baskets means further food crisis.

Evaluation of NW partners

Three New World (NW) partners, namely Tabi Masbate Inc., OFFERS-Panay, and Eastern Visayas Relief Assistance Program (EVRAP) were evaluated last May 2011. The focus of the evaluation was to evaluate the Result 2 'strengthening of local organisations' of its programme. South Research, the external evaluator, called this R-2 evaluation which has been planned since 2 years ago. The evaluation team was composed of Mr. Bob Peeters from South Research, Mr. Siddy Nyang from NW West Africa, Mr. Jaap Opdecoul from NW Bolivia, Mr. Roger Camps and Mr. Hans Schaap of NW country office.

The evaluation tools were simply done, and the methods were participatory. The Board of Directors, staff and other stakeholders were engaged in the discussion related to how the institution was able to build and strengthen people's capacity. The community leaders and members plotted their historical map. They were able to identify the priorities

(EVALUATION | PAGE 4)

Bantay Bigas calls for land distribution during dialogue with NFA Council

■ BY ISA LORENZO | PNFSP

Immediately distribute land to farmers, stop land use conversion, and increase the hectares of land that are planted to rice were some of the recommendations made by Bantay Bigas to the National Food Authority (NFA) Council during a dialogue last March 3. Bantay Bigas is a national network of farmers, consumers, and organizations who advocate for safe, sufficient and affordable rice for every Filipino family. PNFSP is one of the convenors of Bantay Bigas.

Bantay Bigas also pressed for adequate subsidies and support services for farmers. They further recommended that the government allocate adequate funds for agriculture and restore the P8 billion to P15 billion subsidy of the NFA. The group also requested the NFA Council to reduce the market price of rice to P18.25 per kilo or at most P20 per kilo, which according to them, is the price affordable to the poor.

BIOETHANOL PLANT | FROM PAGE 4)

with rice, corn, banana, root crops and vegetables. Farmers and indigenous people alike earn their livelihood from planting these crops.

Furthermore, farmers say that planting sugarcane will result in rodent and locust infestation that will destroy their rice and corn crops. It will also result in the loss of soil biodiversity due to monocropping.

Agricultural workers for GFIL and Ecofuel Land Development Inc. also reported labor rights violations. They experience exploitation in the sugarcane plantation such as spraying toxic fertilizers and pesticides without proper work gear, working for 6 days a week with no contract, and frequent occupational safety hazards. They are also paid severely low wages which is based on pakyaw system.

While there is a pressing need to obtain alternative fuel sources in order to combat the skyrocketing prices of oil, there is a more urgent need to address the hunger and poverty experienced by millions of Filipinos.

Thus, PNFSP supports the recommendations made by the FFM. Among them are: that the lands which have been forcibly seized from the farmers and IPs must be returned peacefully to them, an investigation on the different government agencies involved in the anomalous land titling, and that public consultations/hearings must be conducted in the areas affected by the project.



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ani is the newsletter of the Philippine Network of Food Security Programmes, Inc. (PNFSP). The regular edition is published twice a year and distributed to the network's members.

(EVALUATION | FROM PAGE 3)

of their community. They expressed their likes and dislikes of the projects they had with the institution. After the interviews, focused group discussions and workshops, the evaluation team called for a restitution which was more of initial sharing of their observations, comments and conclusions. Peeters, the head of the evaluation team, promised to furnish all those partners with the final results of the R2-evaluation.

NEW PNFSP STAFF

The Philippine Network of Food Security Programmes is pleased to announce the addition of three new staff to its secretariat.

Jhana D. Tejome is PNFSP's new executive director. She has been with PNFSP since its birth in 2005. She started with PNFSP as the Program Coordinator of the Secretariat from September 2005 until June 2008. She was then the Regional Services Coordinator from July 2008 until September 2009. She then worked with PNFSP member TABI-Masbate from October 2009 until February 2010.

Sharlene Lopez has joined PNFSP as its Research, Documentation, Information and Publication Coordinator. Sharl worked for the peasant organization Asian Peasant Coalition before joining PNFSP.

Vicente Salamero is PNFSP's new Administrative and Finance officer. Enteng has extensive experience in disaster response, having worked in the field operations department of the Citizens Disaster Response Center.

EDITORIAL

NETWORK CONTINUES ITS WORK TO ENSURE FOOD SECURITY

The first half of 2011 had Filipinos deal with rising oil prices, rising food prices, increased transport costs and low wages.

Fuel prices have gone up almost every week while rollbacks are only minimal.

Rice prices of all grades increased by an average of 1.2%. A kilo of NFA rice is sold at P2.00 higher since December 2010. Thus, NFA rice known as the "cheap" rice is no longer available at P25 per kilo. And with the looming NFA privatization, it is inevitable that rice prices will keep on escalating.

According to the World Bank's Food Price Watch, 44 million more people plunged below the \$1.25 poverty line due to higher food prices since June 2010. Simulations by the World Bank further showed that a 10% increase in the Food Price Index will result to an additional 10 million people in the poverty threshold, and an increase of 30% in prices will produce 34 million more.

The fishkill in Batangas and Pangasinan further endangered the food security situation. Losses have amounted to P190 million, 144 million of which are from Taal Lake and is equal to 2,056 metric tons of bangus.

Added to that, the recent onslaught of typhoon Falcon left several regions, including NCR, Central Luzon, CALABARZON, Bicol and Western Visayas reeling from the devastation. Damages to food crops, livestock and fisheries amounted to P132.89 million according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC).

With the continuing threats to food security, PNFSP is determined to strengthen the network thru capacity-building services.

This year marks the start of another three-year program supported by New World Belgium. And with the new additions to the Secretariat staff, PNFSP hopes to better deliver its services to the members.

The Regional Services Coordination program has already conducted a log-framing training with ABI and has had PME consultations with Direct, CRRS-CV, CEDAR, IDPIP-ST, OFFERS-Panay and NRAPI. Through these discussions, the Secretariat has a clearer view on the needs of each members, the updates and current food situation in the regions.

Meanwhile, the SACLAT program implemented community-selected appropriate techniques in Calinog, Iloilo including a rice dryer and the replication of a water catchment and Lorena stove. SACLAT also plan to repair the water impounding in San Mariano, Isabela.

The Research, Documentation, Information and Publication desk is likewise actively engaged in campaigns against Golden Rice and the bioethanol plant in Isabela. The RDIP is also active in its alliance work with RESIST and Bantay Bigas. Trainings on website development for the members are also planned within this year.

The Secretariat hopes to garner more support and cooperation from its members in order to further advance its work on ensuring food security.